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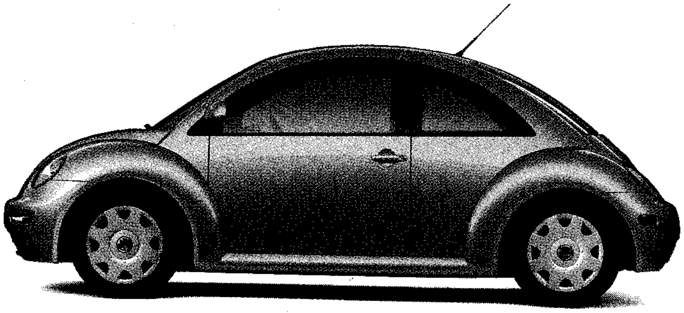

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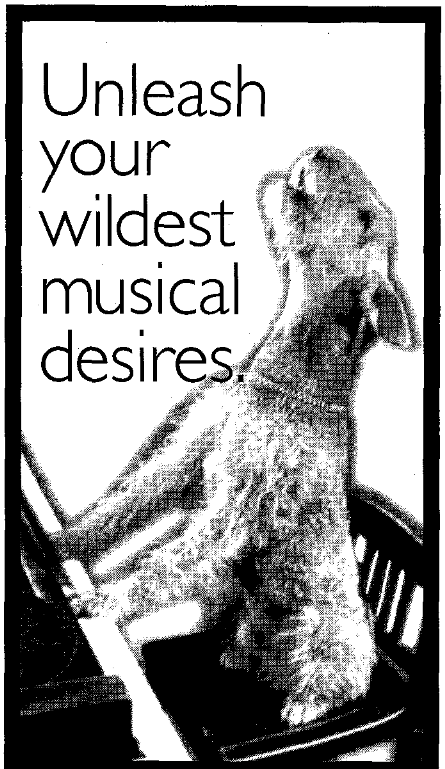
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THE NEW YORKER

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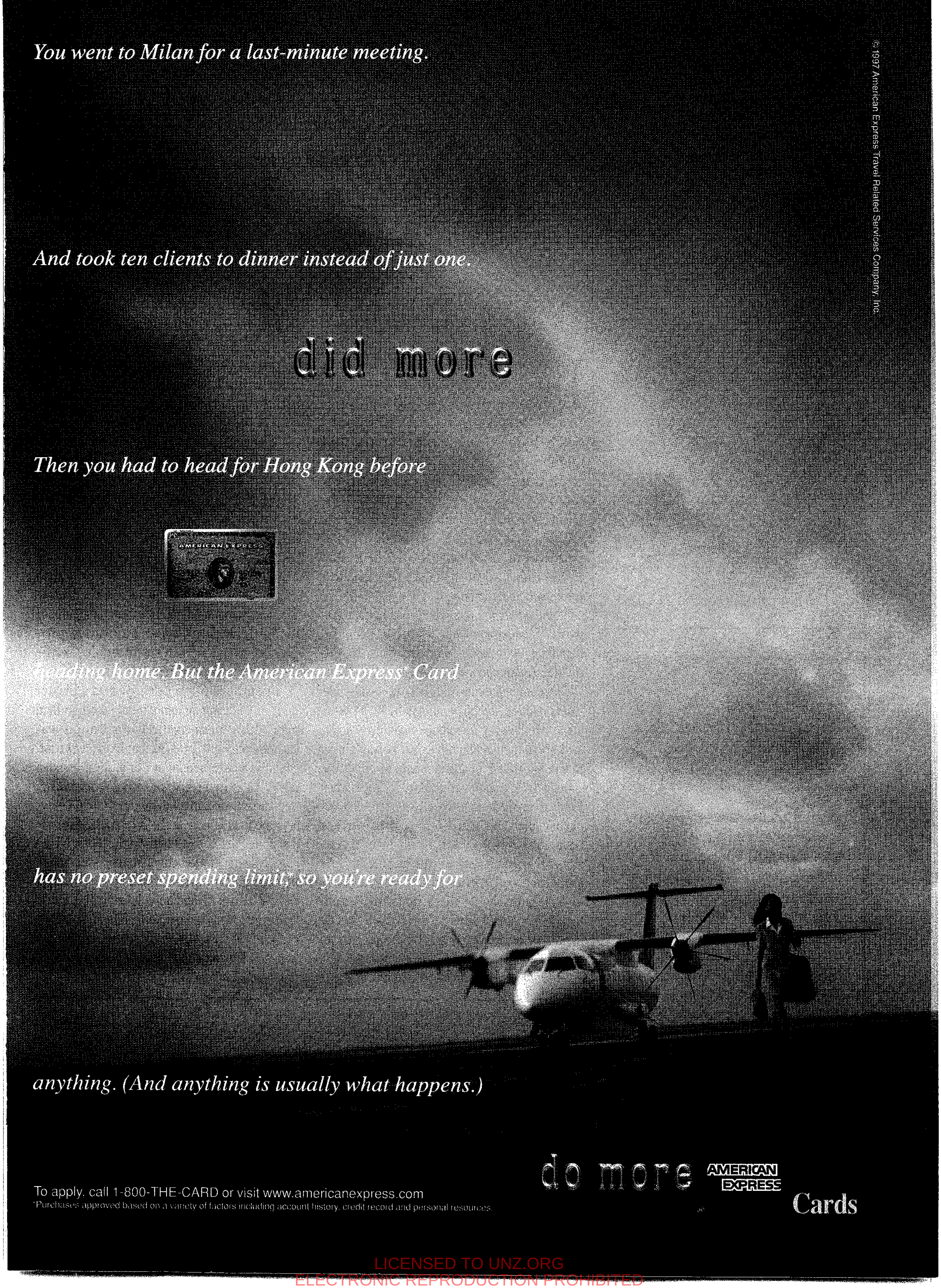

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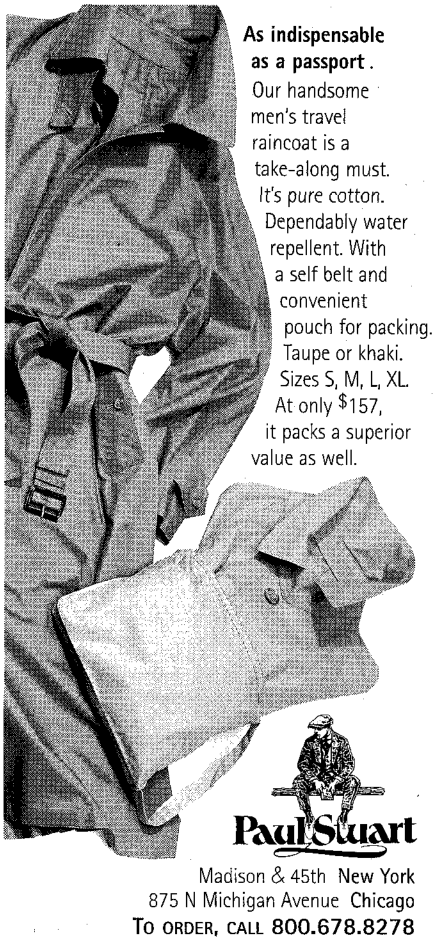

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BAD NEWS

How broadcast journalism is downsizing the world.

IN 1954, when Fred Friendly was producing what would turn out to be a documentary that helped undermine Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist witch-hunts, Friendly and some crew members at CBS took a break to watch, of all things, a BBC broadcast that featured an announcer reading from "The Canterbury Tales" in Middle English.

"That's it!" Friendly shouted.

Someone asked what the hell he meant. What did Middle English and Chaucer have to do with it?

"Dammit, for the right to do what you want," Friendly said. "Poetry, art, and freedom of speech. The freedom to put on whatever you want, without fear."

The anecdote, which is true and is featured in David Halberstam's "The Powers That Be," is so unreal, so anachronistic, and so painfully earnest that it has about it the whiff of cotton-candy apocrypha. There is a reason for that: When Fred Friendly died, last week, at the age of eighty-two, he left behind a culture of broadcast news which, with rare exceptions, has given way to infotainment. The chief betrayal comes not from the journalists themselves—there are many around today who are at least as gifted as Friendly ever was—but, rather, from the corporate imperatives of network news.

The obituaries on Friendly, like the encomiums that have been flowing freely since he took ill a few years ago, have all listed his extraordinary bona fides: the collaboration with Edward R. Murrow on "See It Now"; the long-running documentary series "CBS Reports"; Friendly's decision, in 1966, as president of CBS News, to broadcast the fractious Senate-committee hearings on Vietnam and then his resignation when the network made him replace the hearings with "I Love Lucy." After leaving CBS, Friendly also helped create the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and then instituted one of public television's most innovative programs—the Friendly roundtable "seminars" on various ethical dilemmas.

Friendly is often portrayed as a plaster saint of the First Amendment—and, in fact, his commitment to the Constitution was legendary—but he was far from a purist. He was possessed of a considerable ham bone. To gain a sense of visual storytelling, he studied documentaries at Pathé News and the film library at the Museum of Modern Art. Part of his partnership with Murrow was to make the broadcaster more theatrical. An honest appraisal of Murrow has to admit that there is a straight line leading from Murrow with Marilyn Monroe on his "Person to Person" interview show to Barbara Walters bowing and cooing with Harrison Ford on Oscar night.

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But even if we understand Edward R. Murrow notionally rather than as a reality, there is no doubt that the trend has been toward less and less news and toward a profits-*über-alles* position that scotches the ambitions of even the best-intentioned reporter.

It is hard to say exactly when the corporate values of television began to overwhelm its news values, but there is no doubt that it happened. William Paley, the founder of CBS, was proud of the McCarthy documentary but was not especially eager to repeat the experience. Television was becoming such an incredibly powerful and profitable medium by the late nineteen-fifties that the price of such a documentary, both in the time it absorbed and in the audience it might alienate, seemed to Paley and the rest untenable. Never mind that by 1954 the documentary was not ahead of informed public opinion.

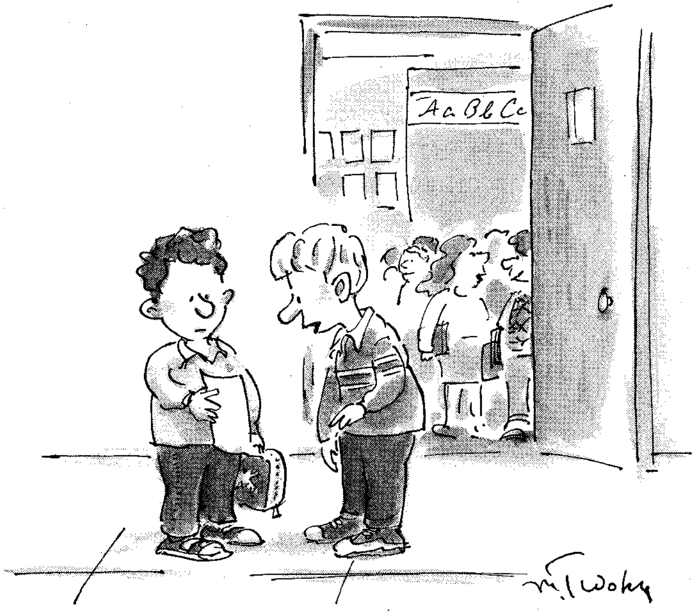
Some nights, the most depressing thing about the evening news is the evening news itself. It has become, in no small part, a format designed for the elderly. (Hence the countless reports on medicine and the corresponding advertisements about acid reflux and incontinence remedies.) The shows are competitive with one another, but the ratings are down. In the quest to reverse the trend, the networks are eliminating foreign-news coverage, closing bureaus, and dumbing down the broadcasts. It is a form of triage that will surely end as suicide.

If there is any truth to the rumor of American cultural dimwittedness and insularity, one can easily begin with the evening news. To watch, say, the ITN evening news in Britain (which is available on some public-television outlets here) is to get a glimpse of the greater world, which is absent from the three American networks. On ITN, as on many other European broadcasts, there is news from India, China, Russia, Indonesia—places that are nearly invisible to an American viewer. Moreover, in Europe, from London to Moscow, the evening news is broadcast in the *evening*, at eight or nine, when working people can actually watch it. As things are here, most of us are left with CNN, which is fine in a real-time crisis but is otherwise a fairly weak gruel.

The irony of the enormous commercial success of "60 Minutes" is that the networks all tried to match the show's profits without equalling its quality. To win big enough ratings in prime time to compete against sitcoms and cop dramas, the newer magazine shows have too often debased themselves with puff.

Network management recused itself from caring very much about news quite a long time ago. In the late seventies, Paley tried to prevent Bill Moyers from leaving CBS for PBS and asked him what it would take. "A regular prime-time show," Moyers said. "Much like Murrow had. On a regular schedule and a set hour."

"I'm sorry, Bill," Paley replied. "I can't do it anymore. The minute is worth too much now." —DAVID REMNICK



"Big deal, an A in math. That would be a D in any other country."

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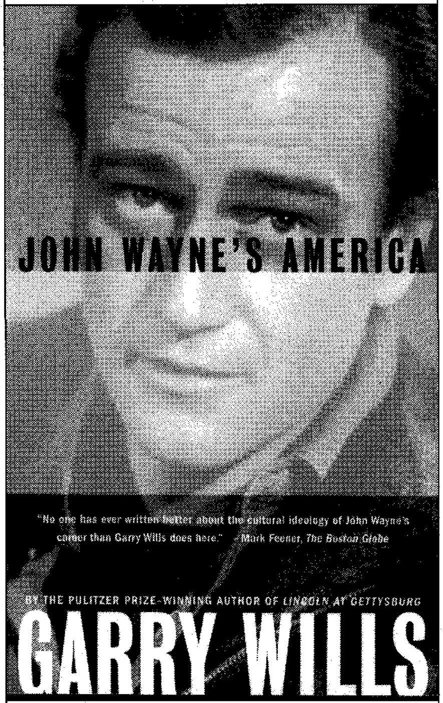
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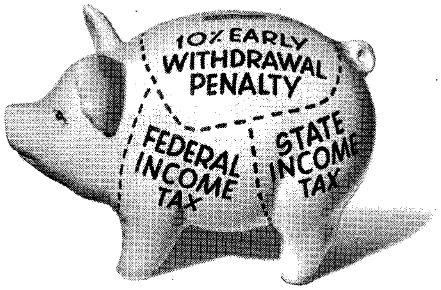

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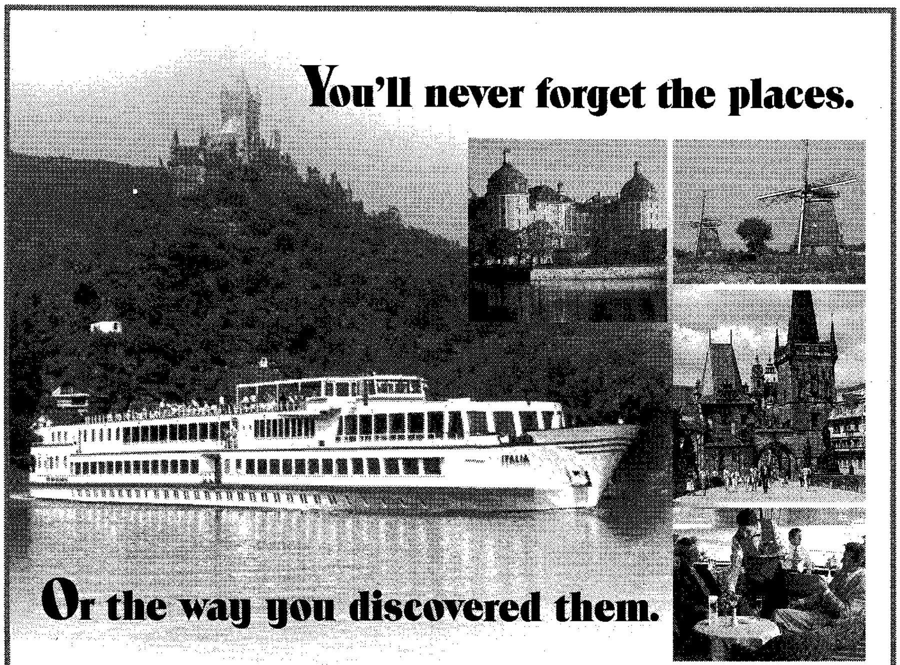

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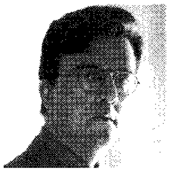

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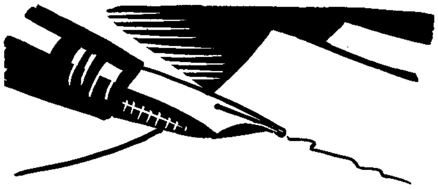
THE MAIL



OUTWITTING DESTINY

As a biologist and a women's-health activist, I found Jerome Groopman's "Decoding Destiny" (February 9th) profoundly disturbing, and not only because it ends with his patient and friend Karen Belz's decision to let herself be mutilated by having her breasts and ovaries removed. It was also disturbing because Groopman accepts, and wants us to accept, the unwarranted assumption that genetic diagnoses will result in more effective therapies and cures. The gene manipulations cited so hopefully by Dr. Groopman have had limited success; there is no evidence that they will be effective, or even feasible, against breast or ovarian cancer—or, indeed, most cancers. Even the people who research gene therapy have criticized the overselling of its potential.

The steadily rising incidence of breast cancer and the striking differences in its occurrence in various parts of this country and of the world suggest that a range of environmental factors must be responsible. This being the case, our current genomania is obscuring critical questions about how to prevent breast cancer and how best to treat or cure it.

RUTH HUBBARD
Cambridge, Mass.

Six years ago, before genetic testing for predisposition to breast cancer was available, but knowing that both my mother and her mother had succumbed to pre-menopausal breast cancer, I underwent prophylactic mastectomy and breast reconstruction. I am continually dismayed when the term "mutilation" is used in reference to this procedure, especially by doctors like Jerome Groopman. The procedure cost me nothing in terms of "self-image and libido," and the psychological gains for me, for my husband, and for my children are beyond calculation.

CATHERINE K. DELLI CARPINI
Ridgefield, Ct.

A NOVEL EXCUSE

Anthony Lane compares my novelization of the updated screen adaptation of "Great Expectations" with Charles Dickens's magnificent novel and finds me wanting (Books, February 9th). I'm not particularly disturbed by this; I think of writing novelizations as a job, not a "career opportunity." Perhaps Diane Keaton's character in Woody Allen's "Manhattan," when asked why she wastes her time writing novelizations, puts it best: "Because it's easy and it pays well."

DEBORAH CHIEL
New York City

FOOD FIGHT

Malcolm Gladwell (in "The Pima Paradox," February 2nd) makes clear his belief that permanent weight loss is not only possible but necessary for good health—a belief that drives him dangerously close to the diet-book authors he criticizes. He does not address the question of whether "leanness" and "health" really are as synonymous as the obesity-treatment community would have everyone believe. While that belief seems to simplify the puzzle of obesity, our reluctance to question it may be the reason that the puzzle has so far proved impossible to solve.

BRADFORD ROBERTS
Glen Allen, Va.

Mr. Gladwell's article was marred by his misunderstanding of the proper use of diet books. I have lost a lot of weight by following recipes like this one:

PAPARDELLE ATKINS

Remove several pages of "Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution" and cut into long strips about one inch wide. Tear into random lengths, discarding tough footnotes. Toss with parsley, garlic, and extra-virgin olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Garnish, if desired, with a finely chopped nutrition guide.

STEPHEN E. WRIGHT
Doylestown, Pa.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Ah, Wilderness!—A Lincoln Center Theatre revival of Eugene O'Neill's comedy, set on Independence Day in 1906. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont. 239-6200.)

Amazing Grace—A murderess (Marsha Mason) reëvaluates her life from her cell on death row, in a drama by Michael Cristofer. In previews through March 14. Opens March 15 at 7. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Cabaret—Natasha Richardson stars in a Roundabout Theatre revival of the 1966 Kander and Ebb musical. Sam Mendes is the director. Rob Marshall choreographed and co-directed. In previews. (Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300.)

The Deep Blue Sea—Blythe Danner and Edward Herrmann return to the stage in a revival of Terence Rattigan's 1952 drama. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Dinah Was—Yvette Freeman portrays the hard-edged jazz singer Dinah Washington in Oliver Goldstick's play with music. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Dress to Kill—The British comic Eddie Izzard returns to town with a new show. In previews. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

The Emperor Jones—The Wooster Group's staging of O'Neill's early drama. One preview on March 11. Opens March 12 at 8 and continues through March 29. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651.)

Happy Days—Ruth Maleczech and Tom Fitzpatrick star in a Mabou Mines production of Beckett's 1961 play. In previews through March 12. Opens March 13 at 7. (Toronado, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 473-1991.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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Hot Klezmer—The clarinettist Harold Seletsky and the singer Hal Jefron join other klezmorim in this celebration of wedding music of the shtetl. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

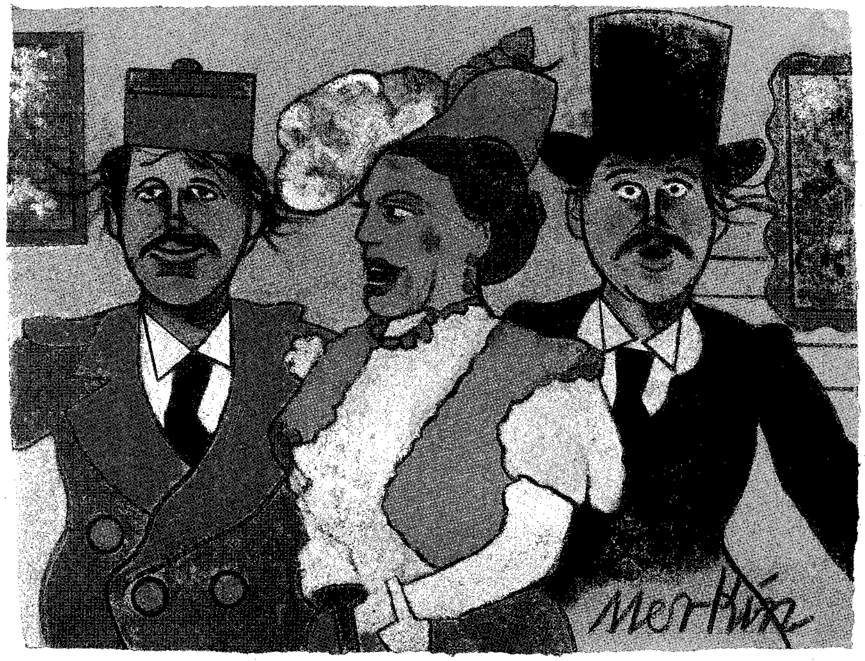
Long Day's Journey Into Night—An Irish Rep staging of O'Neill's drama. With Frances Sternhagen and Brian Murray. Previews begin March 13. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Macbeth—Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett star in George C. Wolfe's staging of Shakespeare's tragedy. In previews through March 14. Opens March 15 at 2 and runs through March 29. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Mystery School—Tyne Daly portrays five women in search of salvation, in a one-woman show written by Paul Selig. Opens March 11 at 7. (Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St., at E. Houston St. 239-6200.)

St. Nicholas—Brian Cox portrays a drama critic having a breakdown, in Conor McPherson's 1997 play. In previews through March 15. Opens March 17 at 8. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

Side Man—A drama by Warren Leight, set during the forties, about a musician's preoccupation with big-band jazz. Michael Mayer is the director. Opens March 11 at 8. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 279-4200.)



Georges Feydeau's "A Flea in Her Ear," at the Laura Pels Theatre.

RICHARD MERKIN

The Sound of Music—The hills are alive (aah-aah-aaaaaaaaah) again. Rebecca Luker is Maria. Susan H. Schulman is the director. Two previews on March 11. Opens March 12 at 6:30. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Art—In the French playwright Yasmina Reza's drama, a debate about a piece of modern art fractures the friendship of three men (Alan Alda, Victor Garber, and Alfred Molina). Matthew Warchus is the director. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

BAFO (Best and Final Offer)—Tom Strelich's dark comedy about post-Cold War defense-industry layoffs. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—The Atlantic Theatre Company presents a dark comedy, set in County Galway, by the young Irish playwright Martin McDonagh. (Reviewed in this issue.) (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Benita Canova—Richard Foreman's latest concoction, a lush exploration of erotic violence, is a memorably voyeuristic experience. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Black Humor—A very funny, very blue one-man skewering of American culture, written and performed by Lewis Black, a standup comedian with theatrical training. Black riffs on any number of subjects, from Nyquil ("It actually makes a nice eggnog") to L.A., where TV executives once made Black audition for a role as himself. (He lost the part.) Black saves his most scathing commentary for the denizens of the Oval Office, noting at one point: "What we've learned in the last twenty years is that we function very well without a leader." (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Closes March 29.)

The Capeman—This musical, which marks Paul Simon's theatrical début, is based on a notorious killing that took place in New York in 1959. Some of the melodies are lovely, but the lyrics and the book, which Simon co-wrote with Derek Walcott, wallow in phony pieties. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/9/98.) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

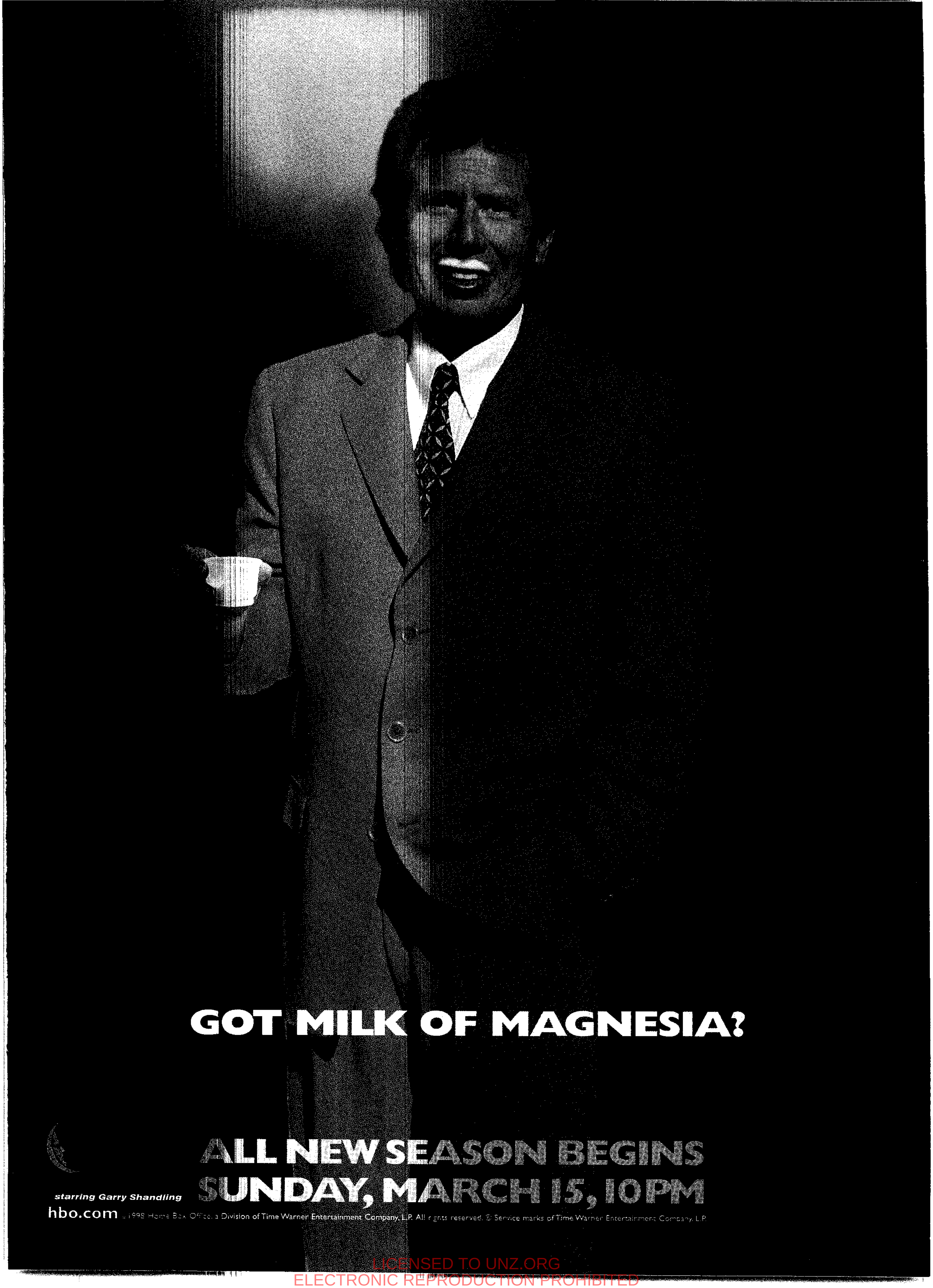
The Diary of Anne Frank—Theatrically, this reworking of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, under the direction of James Lapine, is generally fine. But the play's dogged realism is its fundamental flaw. One of the truths we take away from Anne's diary is that we can't really re-create for ourselves what her dreadful situation was like. (12/15/97) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Eyes for Consuela—Sam Shepard's new play, which stars David Strathairn, is an adaptation of Octavio Paz's 1976 short story "The Blue Bouquet." (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

A Flea in Her Ear—Bill Irwin directs Georges Feydeau's 1907 farce. Mark Linn-Baker leads the cast. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Freak—John Leguizamo ("Spic-O-Rama") portrays dozens of characters in his new one-man comedy. Directed by David Bar Katz. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Handless Maiden—Jeremy Dobrish's delightful new comedy combines a Grimm's fairy tale with two contemporary stories, which begin with a man planning his own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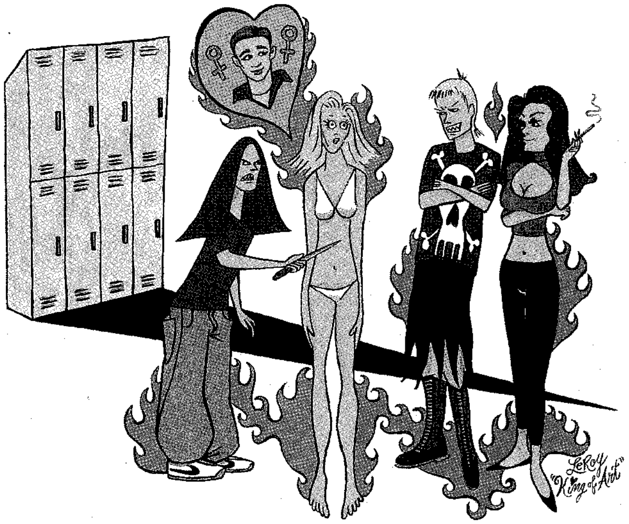
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wedding and a woman who is made a partner in her law firm before her husband is. Eight actors in dual roles segue easily from comedy to seriousness, from farce to realism, and the piece brims with goofy charm. Three cheers for all involved in this Adobe Theatre Company production, including the director, Damon Kiely, and Michael Garin, who wrote the show's amusing songs. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 924-0077. Closes March 29.)

Hazelwood Jr. High—The New Group goes site-specific with a play by Rob Urbinati, based on a real-life murder inside a schoolgirl coterie. (Intermediate School 70, 333 W. 17th St. 279-4200. Closes March 29.)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—Hedwig, as written and portrayed by John Cameron Mitchell, is a sweet transsexual singer from East Berlin, who, between songs, recounts her adventures in a cabaret performance cum stadium act, which also becomes a smart, funny, and very moving exploration of the redemptive, if perhaps fleeting, power of love. Stephen Trask's music and lyrics simultaneously celebrate and send up nearly every modern-rock trope, and Peter Askin's direction, along with the sets and projections, by James Youmans, and the lighting, by Kevin Adams, precisely evoke Hedwig's ragged world. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)



"Hazelwood Jr. High," a site-specific play by Rob Urbinati.

I Will Come Back—The Judy Garland impersonator Tommy Femia, in a musical about the singer's life. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

Joseph Gabriel Magic '98—Mr. Gabriel comes to New York by way of Las Vegas. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

June Moon—Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman's 1929 comedy, set in the world of Tin Pan Alley, is a loving satire of show-biz and musical-comedy conventions, and it has been given an appropriately loving revival. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has created a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film, submerging the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

The Maiden's Prayer—Nicky Silver's newest play, like his earlier work, depicts relationships between emotional cripples. Superficially, it may seem to be a more mature and serious play than some of his others, because it's less manic and more realistic, but it feels cold and artificial. Only the mordant, whiskey-voiced Patricia Clarkson keeps the evening from being altogether plodding. Evan Yionoulis directed. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes March 15.)

Mamba's Daughters—This Target Margin Theatre production of Dorothy and DuBose Heyward's 1939 play about racism in the Carolina Low Country includes some distracting elements, but the sensitive and believable performances, which take the audience into the emotional lives of these plantation workers and their bosses, and the music are powerful. David Herskovits directed. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes March 14.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The clairvoyant claims that his highly entertaining mind-reading act is scam-free. Still, his fascinating "tricks" seem like magic, and at times you feel like you're the only person in the audience who isn't a plant. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Mizlansky/Zilinsky; or, Schmucks—Nathan Lane and Lewis J. Stadlen star in a new comedy by Jon Robin Baitz. Staged by Joe Mantello. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Never the Sinner—John Logan's 1985 play about Leopold and Loeb sweeps its audience into the boys' twisted friendship without ever losing sight of the brutality of their "crime of the century"—a balancing act that Mr. Logan and the director, Ethan McSweeny, carry off seamlessly. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Paul McKenna's Hypnotic World—The British-television mesmerizer comes to Broadway. Continues Sundays and Mondays through March 29. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Pride's Crossing—Tina Howe's new play is a tedious switchback ride up a mountain of memories from the life of Mabel Tidings Bigelow, who is ninety and once swam the English Channel. Fortunately, Mabel is portrayed by Cherry Jones, who polishes all the tics, fumbles, and feisty outbursts of a nonagenarian to a high shine. Jack O'Brien directed. (1/5/98) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Ragtime—E. L. Doctorow's epic novel chronicling three turn-of-the-century New York families (Wasp, Jewish, and black) is here transformed into a historical pageant designed along the magisterial theatrical lines of Noël Coward's "Cavalcade" and Jerome Kern's "Show Boat." It's a big, brave, passionate gamble, masterfully directed by Frank Galati. (2/2/98) (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

R & J—A promising, if not exactly new, idea—schoolboys escape regimentation and discover their own passion by performing "Romeo and Juliet"—yields a few gripping moments surrounded by a lot of overheated panting, shouting, and foot-stomping. Although Greg Shamie and Daniel J. Shore, as the eponymous couple, generally manage the several layers of characterization with fluidity and believability, the other cast members resort too often to caricature. Adapted and directed by Joe Calarco. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Richard II and **Richard III**—The beginning and the end of the Wars of the Roses, presented in repertory by Theatre for a New Audience. Ron Daniels, the director, has made a thematic mess of two of Shakespeare's most politically astute—and darkly funny—plays. But Christopher McCann's Richard III is frighteningly seductive, and Neil Patel's versatile sets, along with Donald Holder's lighting effects, create a moody ambience. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Richard II—Bradford Cover's Richard evolves affectingly from a confident monarch with an ironic smirk to a miserable, deposed prisoner. Other elements (the visuals, some of the acting) in this Pearl Theatre Company production of the Bard's play are not as keen as Cover's performance. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes March 22.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—The sleight-of-hand artist returns to the stage with an encore production of his 1994 one-man show. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3471.)

Rootless Beauties—Two rarely seen Tennessee Williams one-acts, "Confessional" and "The Mutilated." (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes March 22.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it (if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively): its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, Andrew Jackness's sets, and Jane Greenwood's costumes. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—A comic revue inspired by the Fodor's handbook of the same title. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Shopping and Fucking—A small, sketchy piece of British boulevard nihilism, by the first-time playwright Mark Ravenhill, which attempts to dramatize capitalism's warping effects. (2/16/98) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians, starring Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. The sandpapery friction that the twosome created so successfully on TV isn't much in evidence—they seem reduced to lovability. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—With the Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Closes March 22.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Jeff Baron's sweet if predictable Upper West Side comedy, about two Jewish men of different generations. Eli Wallach, in a masterly performance, finds great dignity in the title character, an eighty-six-year-old widower. Lonny Price directed. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER TANGO:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE**

LEROY "KING OF ART"

LIFE: Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **1776:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY—March 11 and March 14 at 8: "Mercuric Tidings," "Eventide," and "The Word." . . ¶ March 12 at 8 and March 15 at 3: "Arden Court," "Last Look," and "Esplanade." . . ¶ March 13 at 8, March 14 at 2, and March 15 at 7:30: "Danbury Mix," "Prime Numbers," and "Piazzolla Caldera." (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

"NOCTURNE"—The Buto-Sha Tenkei company, founded in 1981 by Ebisu Torii and Mutsuko Tanaka, returns with its phantasmagoric vision of an urban underworld. The troupe performs in the traditional Butoh style: naked, heads shaved, bodies powdered with rice dust. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 10-13 at 8, March 14 at 2 and 8, and March 15 at 2 and 7:30.)

TRINITY IRISH DANCE COMPANY—The Chicago-based company adds a touch of percussive individuality to the strict structure of Irish jigs, reels, and blackthorns, in such works as "The Mist," "Treble Jig," and "The Mollies." (Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 718-960-8833. March 14 at 8.)

"FOOD FOR THOUGHT"—Three curators, Dean Moss, Barbara Bryan, and Wendy Wiseman, serve up three menus of dance and performance. No matter which evening you attend, a donation of two canned goods cuts your ticket price in half. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 13-15 at 8:30.)

CARNIVAL—Dance Theatre Workshop continues its choreographers' showcase. March 10-11 at 8: **DAVID PARKER AND THE BANG GROUP** have wry, subversive fun with choreography that transforms pointe shoes into tap shoes and incorporates the breathing of winded dancers into the score. . . . ¶ March 12-13 at 8: **DAVID NEUMANN** and his six-member troupe appear in "Duck, You Sucker," "It's Gonna Rain," and "Appropriate Behavior." . . . ¶ March 14 at 8 and March 15 at 3: The **SEÁN CURRAN COMPANY** offers five works, including "Folk Dance for the Future" and "Hegel's Vacation." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Through March 22.)

"RHYTHMTRAVELS"—Maia Claire Garrison and her nine-woman troupe M'Zawa Danz meld West African dance vocabulary with movements from hip-hop and modern dance. (Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. 996-1100. March 12 and March 14 at 8 and March 15 at 5.)

MICHAEL MAO DANCE—The choreographer, a native of Shanghai, and his twelve-member international corps present repertory works. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. March 12-14 at 8.)

JENNIFER LACEY AND ZEENA PARKINS—The choreographer and the composer join forces on "(Voice Tells) Fourteen Tiny Pictures, No More, No Less." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. March 12-15 at 8:30.)

JAZZ DANCE AMERICA—Four pieces by assorted choreographers, including Maurice Curry's "Poker Game," in which cardplayers gamble for a woman, a role danced with spitfire precision by Ruthlyn Salomons. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. March 13-14 at 8 and March 15 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

WARREN CHIASSON—Ain't but a few of them left, but modern vibraphonists do exist who still remember what jazz sounded like before bebop, and Chiasson—a relocated Canadian who first gained attention with George Shearing—is among the best of them. (New School Jazz Performance Space, 55 W. 13th St. 229-5488. March 12 at 6:30.)

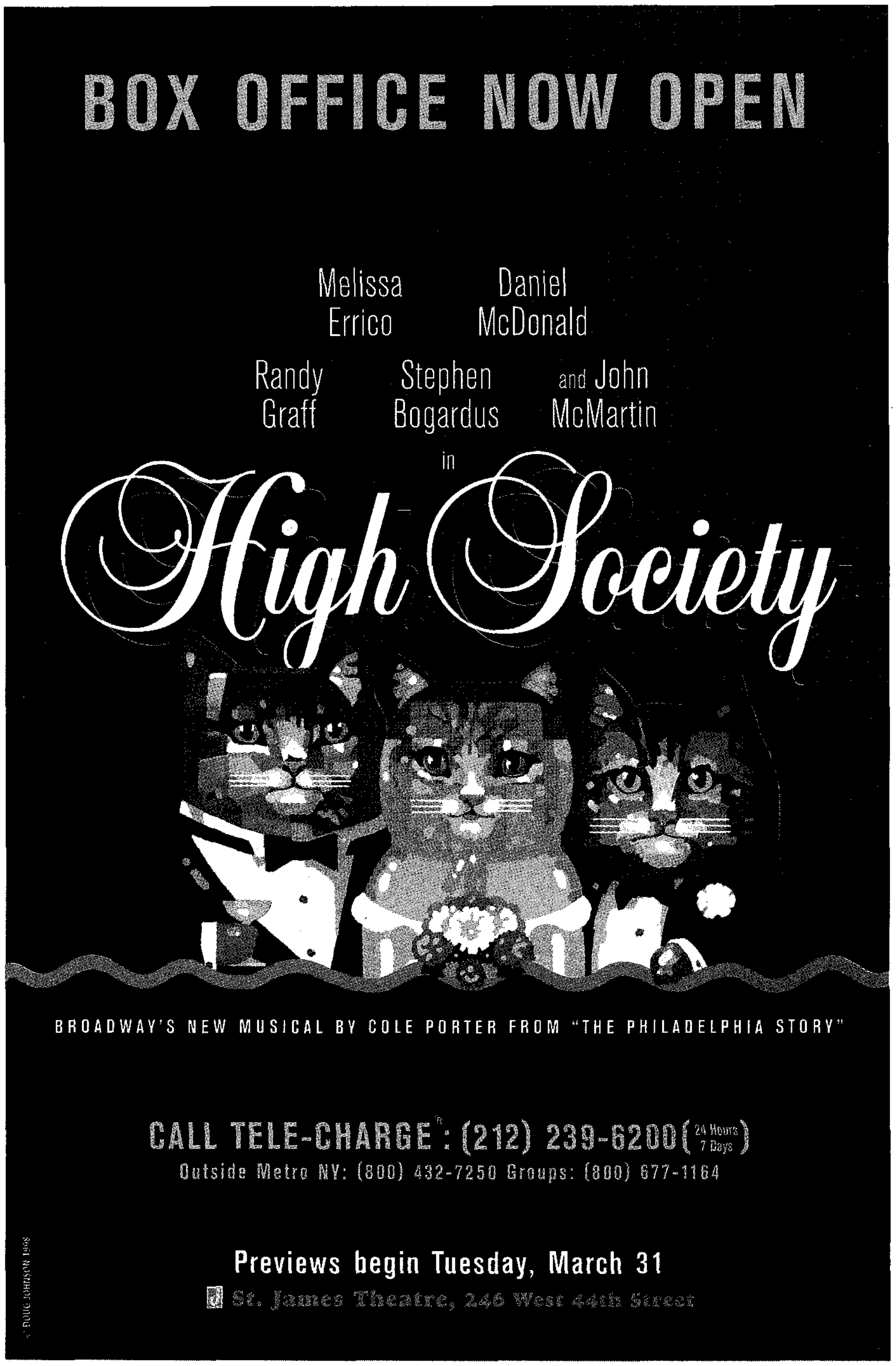
BILLY TAYLOR TRIO—Taylor's piano work mirrors his personality, which is sturdy, erudite, and resolutely mainstream. Epiphanies may be few, but quality is a foregone conclusion. Alto saxophonist Sue Terry sits in. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 12 at 7.)

PUFF DADDY & THE FAMILY—A Who's Who of chart-busting R. & B. acts, headed by Sean (Puffy) Combs, who virtually monopolized pop radio and MTV last year with his canny appropriations of other people's material. (Sting is now twice as rich thanks to Combs's decision to turn "Every Breath You Take" into the backing track for his Grammy-winning "I'll Be Missing You.") With Lil' Kim, Mase, Dru Hill, and Busta Rhymes. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 12 at 8.)

GYPSY FESTIVAL—Featuring the Romanian band Taraf de Haidouks and the Hungarian folk revival outfit Ökrös. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 14 at 8 and March 15 at 7.)

THE CHIEFTAINS—From their late-fifties work in the ensemble Ceoltoiri Chualann to their recent collaborations with Van Morrison and James Galway, these instrumental wizards have been doing for traditional Irish music what Bill Monroe did for the rural American string band: giving it a dignity that lifts it well above folkloric sentimentality. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. March 17 at 8.)

JAMES GALWAY AND PHIL COULTER—The renowned flutist performs with the producer, songwriter, and pianist. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 17 at 8.)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CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—March 12: An evening of songs written by the electric folkie Phil Ochs, as interpreted by such artists as David Buskin, John Wesley Harding, Tom Paxton, and Peter Yarrow. March 13: During the eighties, **Jules Shear** was an untouchable cult hero; in the nineties, he's remained sub rosa. But he returns with a vengeance on his fantastic new "Between Us." This show features a clutch of duets with such artists as **Suzzy Roche,** of the redoubtable Roches, and the celebrated folksinger **Amy Rigby.** March 14: **Buster Poindexter and his Spanish Rocketship Band.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The rambling warbler returns: postmodern folkie **Michelle Shocked** (March 15-18) emerges from hibernation to play her first New York shows in quite some time, performing new material from her limited-release CD, "Good News." A few years ago, this would have been a media event. . . . ¶ Downstairs@CBGB: March 16: **Dadadah,** with **Kitty Brazelton.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Buddy Guy may be a better-known singer, but **Otis Rush** (March 13-14) has been nipping at his ankles for more than four decades. Rush is nothing if not intense: his phrasing stings with a lyricism just this side of murderous, and his pledge "I've been wronged, but I won't be wronged again" is just as chilling.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—March 12: **Roni Size** and his multiracial collective, **Reprazent,** make aggressive, hypnotically repetitive drum-and-bass music, most of it instrumental, that sounds best at very high volumes in crowded clubs. With the excellent d.j.s (and Size collaborators) **Bryan Gee** and **Jumping Jack Frost.** March 14: The amphetamine-friendly neo-punk high jinks of **Insane Clown Posse.** March 16: Celtic rock with the **Saw Doctors.**

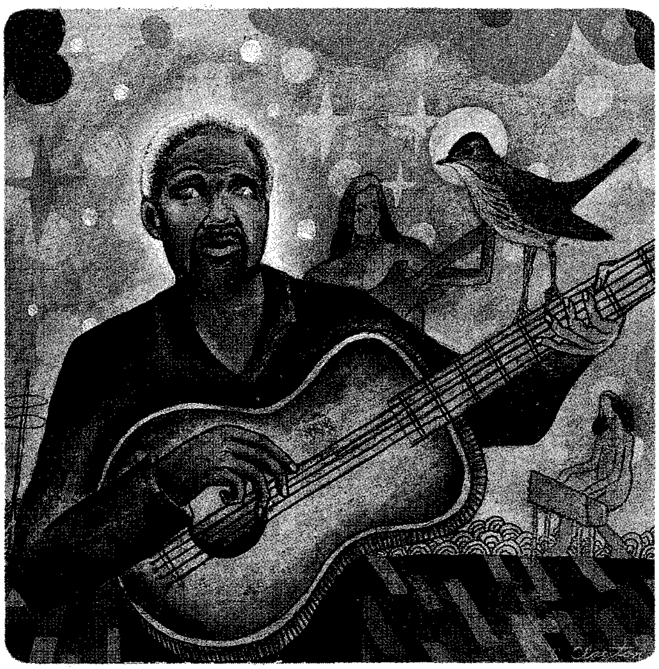
Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 11: The fierce and uncompromising singer **Toshi Reagon** headlines an evening of all-female world music, featuring **Fortuna,** from Brazil, and **Rasha,** from Sudan. March 12: A singer-songwriter festival with **Joseph Arthur, Heather Eatman, Matt Keating,** and **Rufus Wainwright.** March 13: **Guitar Oblique,** an ad-hoc collective of avant-garde six-string slingers, featuring former Living Colour leader **Vernon Reid,** downtown savant **Elliott Sharp,** and **David Torn;** later in the evening, Faith No More singer **Mike Patton** takes the stage.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—March 14: **Cheri Knight,** who spends most of her time at home in the Berkshires growing and selling flowers, also makes well-crafted country songs populated with characters involved in feuds and recrimination and heartbreak. Her strong new album, "The Northeast Kingdom," features guest appearances by Emmylou Harris and Steve Earle.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The Argentinean tenor saxophonist **Gato Barbieri** (March 11-13) has a sensuous tone and a résumé that includes everything from avant-garde work in the sixties to composing the score for "Last Tango in Paris." Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—March 11 and March 14: **Willie Nelson,** the formerly tax-troubled country star (who's now using his famous unblinking expression to great effect in "Wag the Dog"), makes a rare club appearance. With the great country singer **Billy Joe Shaver.** March 13: The award-winning slick bluegrass pickings of the **Del McCoury Band.** March 17: **Béla Fleck and the Flecktones,** led by the first performer to parlay banjo virtuosity and matinée-idol looks into a successful recording career.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—On its excellent début album, **Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise** (March 14) moves effortlessly among styles, from Motown-inflected R. & B. to driving Texas-style blues to traditional soul. Bradley, a blind former street busker from Detroit by way of Alabama, has such a haunting gravel-and-silk voice that the band's solid musicianship is upstaged on nearly every track. March 17: Under the leadership of the tradition-rattling Celtic-music gadfly Larry Kirwan, the raucously rocking **Black 47** has become an American version of the Pogues—only with a wider musical point of view and fewer barroom brawls.



Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise, at Wetlands.

CHRISTIAN CLAYTON

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The **Hilton Ruiz** quartet is in March 12-14. Pianist Ruiz, whose idiomatic versatility laid the groundwork for such recent genre benders as Danilo Perez and Ed Simon, is equally at home with both Latin and jazz music. The unsung hero of innumerable groups from the past two decades, he deserves serious appreciation for his own dexterous piano work. Sundays belong to the **Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra;** Mondays to the **Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra;** and Tuesdays to the **Duke Ellington Orchestra.** Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through March 15: **Celia Cruz,** the first lady of salsa, performs with **Tito Puente,** the timbales king. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Vocalist **Dixie Carter** holds forth through March 28. . . . ¶ Across the hall, pianist **Peter Mintun** is in charge at Bemelmans Bar.

Danny's Skylight Room, 346 W. 46th St. (265-8133)—March 12-15: **Blossom Dearie** peels grapes with crystalline tone and perfect diction.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Tenor saxophonist **Benny Golson** (through March 15), with his brawny tone, full-throttle energy, and impeccable credentials (the Jazztet, Blakey's Jazz Messengers), is a genuine hard-bop hero. He's also one of the finest jazz composers, with at least three classics to his name: "I Remember Clifford," "Whisper Not," and "Stablemates." He visits the city only occasionally, and in a typical rousing set he reminds New Yorkers what they've been missing. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—The presence of in-it-for-the-long-haul figures like pianist and vocalist **Valerie Capers** (March 13-15) acts as a stabilizing force for jazz in this city. A peripheral figure for decades, owing to her deep involvement in jazz education, Capers deserves an overdue shot at the spotlight. A slashing post-bop trumpeter with a room-filling sonority, **Ingrid Jensen** (March 17-19) sounds anxious to stake her claim.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—**Mulgrew Miller** (through March 14) is a product of Memphis, a town whose jazz pianists invariably fall under the shadow of the florid legend Phineas Newborn. Miller, who tested his mettle with Art Blakey in the eighties, can also be loquacious; his solos tend toward grand orations. In a duo setting, **Ron Carter** shows why he's the most famous jazz bassist alive.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—The **Matt Wilson** quartet is in the Old Office through March 15. Wilson vies with Leon Parker as a young drummer with bounding growth potential. His "As Wave Follows Wave" was one of last year's more intriguing recordings, and his new "Going Once, Going Twice" is an engaging followup.

Lenox Lounge, 288 Lenox Ave., between 124th and 125th Sts. (427-0253)—March 13-14: The **Dewey Redman** quartet. As an integral member of Ornette Coleman and Keith Jarrett's bands in the seventies, tenor saxophonist Redman was fusing earth-toned blues, free-jazz excursions, and reverential bop and ballads long before his celebrated son, Joshua, even knew which end of the sax you blew into.

Michael's Pub at Bill's Gay Nineties, 57 E. 54th St. (758-2272)—The ultra-soignée cabaret diva **Julie Wilson** in an open-ended run.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, Art Deco shrine, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. The revue **"Rhythm on the Rainbow . . . The Hot Harmonies of the Boswell Sisters"** stars Dee Hoty, Sally Mayes, and Nancy Opel.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—The **Marty Ehrlich** group has the floor through March 15. Making some of the smartest music around, this exceptional saxophonist and clarinettist revels in the wealth of post-sixties jazz: freewheeling expressionism and cross-conversational counterpoint. Arresting structure and multidirectional swing keep a tight watch over the proceedings. His colleagues, drummer Billy Drummond, pianist Michael Caine, bassist Michael Formaneck, and saxophonist Stan Strickland (Boston's best-kept secret), are urgent players with limitless resources and imagination; beside them, the majority of mainstream jazzmen sound anemic. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—No, pianist **Brad Meldhau** (through March 15) isn't Bill Evans reincarnated, despite what his record company would have you believe. But he is a fleet, assured improviser who has developed a lovely give-and-take with his partners, drummer Jorge Rossy and bassist Larry Grenadier. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

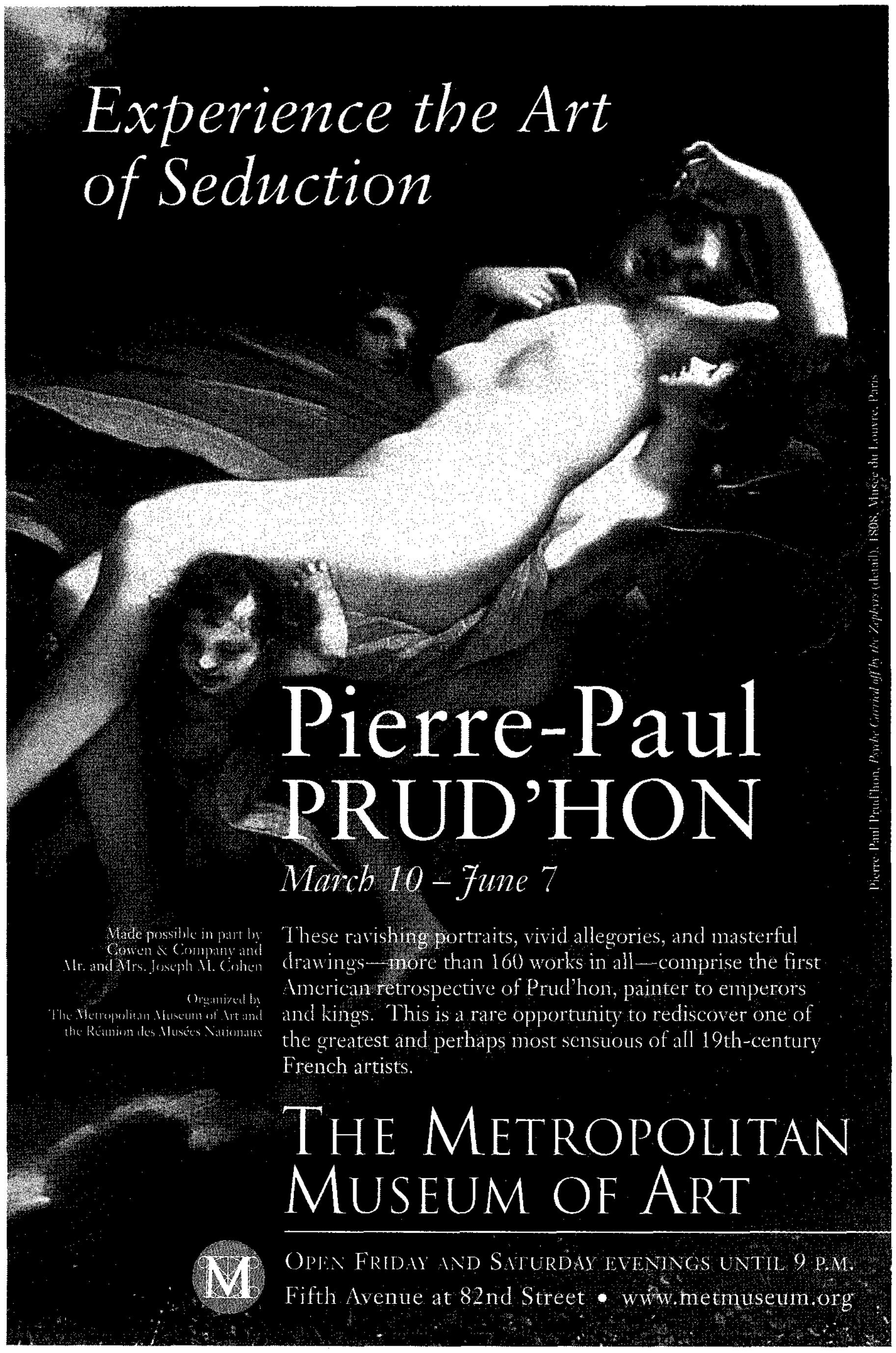
Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Augustin Pajou, Royal Sculptor." Through May 24. . . . ¶ "When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles in the Metropolitan and Cleveland Museums of Art." Through May 17. . . . ¶ "Paul Strand Circa 1916." Through May 31. . . . ¶ "Conversion by Candlelight: The Four Magdalens by Georges de la Tour (1593-1652)." Through March 15. . . . ¶ An exhibition at the Costume Institute devoted to the work of Gianni Versace. Through March 22. . . . ¶ "The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part One: Calligraphy." Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—For an artist whose roots are in sixties and seventies Conceptualism, Chuck Close enjoys unusually wide popularity. The early black-and-white blowup portraits of friends in the downtown art scene—none flattering, all overwhelming—have lost no punch over the last three decades. They are not necessarily easy to look at, and that difficulty attests to their strength. The later works, more portraits of friends famous and obscure, are characterized by modular blobs of often intense color, giving them a trippy, psychedelic splendor. Through May 26. . . . ¶ "Artists and Subjects: Picasso to Stella" examines the guises of twentieth-century portraiture. Through May 25. . . . ¶ "Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism," a centennial exhibition that includes sketches, photographs, and maquettes of architectural projects by the Finnish modernist. Through May 19. . . . ¶ The current Fernand Léger retrospective has been substantially edited from a much larger exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and according to observers who caught both shows, the winnowing has only worked to Léger's benefit. Curator Carolyn Lanchner's show is tight and focussed and there's no dreary student work: the very first picture is remarkable. The earlier paintings are by far the most successful, with their syncretism of Cubism, Futurism, and the occasional Dadaist fillip. But as Léger grew older and his pictures got bigger, there was a corresponding decrease in the vitality of his own take on the glamour and heroism of the machine age. Through May 12. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years" is an impressive survey of art in every medium, including some of the country's greatest masterpieces. The exhibition ranges from the Neolithic to the dynastic era and has no particular focus; with works of this quality, however, no one's complaining. One of the most fascinating objects is an earthenware basin from Xi'an, painted with stylized fishes and enigmatic representations of human heads, which dates to the late sixth or the early fifth millennium B.C. China's preoccupation with its own past is a subtle, recurring theme: one of the most exquisite porcelain objects is a Sung-dynasty pot that echoes the shape of an Archaic bronze cauldron. Star power is supplied by four of the famous life-size earthenware warriors, and a magnificent horse, from the tomb of Qin Shihuangdi, discovered in Xi'an in 1977. One gorgeous item comes not from China but from Tibet—a finely detailed silk tapestry, partially gilded, of Budong, one of the Kings of Bright Wisdom, his scarves flying like forks of lightning. Through June 3. . . . ¶ "After 'Mountains and Sea': Frankenthaler 1956-59." Through May 3. . . . ¶ "Visions of Paris: Robert Delaunay's Series." Through May 24. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"A Century in Crisis" comprises the contemporary portion of the institution's blockbuster exhibition "China: 5,000 Years." Chinese art in the past century has been invaded by Western influences, which typically show up decades after a style has been abandoned in Europe and America. The results are often problematic. For example, Cheng Zhang's "Rustic Scene," from 1930, is naturalistically detailed and drawn in Western perspective, which makes it sit uneasily in the traditional vertical-scroll format. "Women in the Twelve Months," by a late-nineteenth-century illustrator named Wu Jiayan, depicts a series of lifeless beauties in traditional costume, voguing away in an architectural space jarringly rendered in the Western manner. The terrifying tackiness of works from the Cultural Revolution poses a real challenge: what is one to make of the portrait of a young woman doctor on a fisherman's wharf, simpering as though she'd stepped out of a Norman Rockwell painting? Some of the work, however, has enormous graphic power—for example, a set of four monumental calligraphic scrolls by Wang Dongling, from 1987. Through May 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Bill Viola," a mid-career survey devoted to the video artist. Through May 10. . . . ¶ "Arthur Dove: A Retrospective." For years the Whitney has been accused of pandering to art-world fashion. The recent Richard Diebenkorn retrospective and this show demonstrate that the museum is more than willing to be uncool. Along with such artists as John Marin and Marsden Hartley, Dove (1880-1946) was a staple of Alfred Stieglitz's vanguard gallery, 291. He may not have aged as well as his contemporaries, but he remains a crucial innovator—by some accounts, he, and not Kandinsky, was the first abstractionist. His style of abstract landscape never dies: one might visit any number of downtown galleries and view pictures whose only advance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These ravishing portraits, vivid allegories, and masterful drawings—more than 160 works in all—comprise the first American retrospective of Prud'hon, painter to emperors and kings. This is a rare opportunity to rediscover one of the greatest and perhaps most sensuous of all 19th-century French artists.

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Pierre-Paul Prud'hon, *Psyche Carried off by the Zephyrs* (detail), 1808, Musée du Louvre, Paris

over Dove's is that they now come cloaked in the rhetoric of the body, gender, sexuality, and so on. Through April 12. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Scattered Petals, Fallen Leaves, Shards of Glass: The Work of Bing Hu," the latest in the museum's Working in Brooklyn series, presents sculptures—windshield-scrap curtains, glass-bottle chandeliers—that incorporate debris the artist picked up near her Williamsburg studio. Through May 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—"Great Cities, Small Treasures" provides a fascinating snapshot of life in some of the world's first urban centers—the cities of the Indus Valley, in modern-day Pakistan. Figurines in terra cotta and bronze from Mohenjo-daro, which carefully delineate the different groups and castes in the ancient city, prove that there was ethnic diversity among its residents even four thousand years ago. Style mattered: a six-strand swath of carnelian beads is so heavy that archeologists aren't sure whether it was worn as a necklace or a belt. The most famous object from the Indus is included—a small steatite bust of somebody known as the Priest-King, whose long, elegant eyes and placid smile bespeak a crisp sense of divine right. Through May 3. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St. (744-8181)—"The Scent of Ink," its funky title notwithstanding, is an exhibition of rare taste and beauty, bringing together fifty masterworks of Chinese painting from the collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp. It opens with an exuberant hanging scroll of "The Immortal Lan Caihe Playing a Flute," by Chen Zihe, who was said to have done his best work while drunk. "In Search of Plum Blossoms," a hand scroll by the Ming-dynasty master Wen Nan, is a detailed vision of rustic life, executed in pale shades of green and rose on golden silk. In a series of eight landscapes by the seventeenth-century painter Lan Shen, exquisitely mounted in an album, the brightly colored inks have such sparkling intensity that they might have been applied yesterday. Through June 20. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway (966-1313)—"African Faces, African Figures" is a well-mounted exhibition of the collection of the French sculptor Armand P. Arman, who made his name in the sixties with obsessive accumulations of everyday objects, piled up in vitrines. There are some impressive piles on display here, too—twenty-six smoothly carved wooden masks from the Mende people of Sierra Leone, adorned with snakes, horns, and Muslim amulets, have a visceral force. Arman may have been inspired in his own work by the Congolese *nkondi* exhibited here—small, squat wooden figures of ferocious aspect, whose bodies are completely covered with pounded-in iron nails and blades. A delicate nine-inch-tall wooden sculpture from the Tabwa region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of a man carrying his chief on his back (in order to prevent his leader's feet from touching the ground), reveals a refined, lyrical mood in the continent's art. Through April 19. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

"Self-Portrait with Leica" (1931), by Ilse Bing, at Houk.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Jean Fautrier (1898-1964)—"Black Nudes and Other Early Works," a splendid show of a once eminent, then somewhat forgotten, now once again fashionable French painter. Mark Rothko admired Fautrier's nimbuses of thick oil paint—which were not so different in texture from his own—and apparently the neglect that Fautrier's work suffered in this country further discouraged the suicidal Abstract Expressionist. The works in the show are from the twenties, a lesser-known period of the artist's career, which makes it doubly exciting for those interested in this recherché material. Through April 11. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays.)

Donald Judd (1928-94)—Early fabricated sculpture from 1965 to 1976 by the pivotal Minimalist. Judd had a reputation as a cold and curmudgeonly sort, but within the severe confines of his reductive art he could manage unexpected sensuousness: for example, an untitled "stacked" piece from 1970, in which the artist combined shiny brass with red fluorescent Plexiglas. Through March 14. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

Loren MacIver—A retrospective of sfumato oils and pastels by the nearly nonagenarian painter whose foggy canvases—of chestnut blossoms, green votive lights, a snowy rooftop view out of her studio window—have a homey gleam that owes more to poetry (MacIver was friends with Elizabeth Bishop, Marianne Moore, Dylan Thomas, et al.) than to any of the art-world isms she has outlived. Through March 14. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050.)

Short List—**REYNOLDS BEAL,** Beacon Hill Fine Art, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 734-3636. Through March 21. . . . **DAVID BIERK,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510. Through March 21. . . . **THERESA BERNSTEIN,** Whalen, 24 W. 57th St. 397-9700. Through April 18. . . . **JOHAN CRETEN AND ROBERT GREENE,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through March 28. . . . **SAM FRANCIS,** Gray, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 472-8787. Through March 31. . . . **MARY FRANK,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through April 4. . . . **KATHRYN FREEMAN,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through March 31. . . . **GIAMBOLOGNA,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Through April 4. . . . **MORRIS GRAVES,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through March 28. . . . **ELLSWORTH KELLY,** Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. 489-3331. Through March 14. . . . **SHERRY KERLIN,** Winston Wächter, 39 E. 78th St. 327-2526. Through April 11. . . . **DANIEL LUDWIG,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Through April 11. . . . **MARISOL,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Through March 28. . . . **GEORGE MCNEIL,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. 644-8300. Through March 28. . . . **ALEXANDER NEY,** Zalman, 24 W. 57th St. 246-1155. Through April 2. . . . **FELICIEN ROPS,** Shepherd, 21 E. 84th St. 861-4050. Through April 25. . . . **GEORGE SEGAL,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. 586-0110. Through April 4. . . . **VOLKER STELZMANN,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through March 28. . . . **ANNE TRUITT,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through March 21. . . . **PAUL WALDMAN,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through March 28. . . . **WILLIAM ZORACH,** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223. Through March 14.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Renée Cox—"Rajé, a Superhero: The Beginning of a Bold New Era," an installation of photomontaged cibachromes clearly in synch with the mood of Quentin Tarantino's "Jackie Brown" and the renewed vogue for seventies blaxploitation movies. Many African-American artists in recent years have, perversely, celebrated stereotypical racial images. The persona of Rajé is an effervescent, badass blend of Superwoman, Cleopatra Jones, and RuPaul. Through March 28. (Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. 206-0297.)

John Wesley—"Favorite Works," a selection of canvases and works on paper by a Pop artist who never gained quite the fame of his peers but who has always been an eccentric and lively presence on the scene. This show includes works from 1968 to the present, and demonstrates that Wesley is as much of our time as he is of the sixties. Through March 21. (Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555.)

"Maverick"—An exceptionally smart-looking installation of works by several artists who are known for crossing the boundaries between genres. Jean-Marc Bustamante's installation juxtaposes two large-scale black-and-white photographs of interiors with a few birdcages that contain live finches. (Matthew Barney's recent "Cremaster 5" installation at Barbara Gladstone included live doves—a trend in the making?) Katharina Fritsch contributes a tower of white plaster brains. Roni Horn joins her interest in Minimalist form (i.e., the grid) with photography, in a manner that evokes the industrial landscapes of the Bechers without any of their dry, documentary approach. Through April 11. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.)

Short List—**vito acconci,** Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300. Through April 1. . . . **matthew benedict,** Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave. 367-7474. Through April 25. . . . **jack featherly,** Team, 527 W. 26th St. 279-9219. Through March 14. . . . **graham gillmore,** Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through March 14. . . . **ken grimes,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through March 14. . . . **robert grosvenor,** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through March 21. . . . **mary heilmann,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366. Through April 18. . . . **anna ruth henriques,** Liebman Magnan, 552 W. 24th St. 255-3225. Through March 21. . . . **pello irazu,** Weber, 529 W. 20th St. 691-5711. Through March 21. . . . **david ivie** and **matt marello,** Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318. Both shows through April 4. . . . **alain kirili,** Marlborough, 211 W. 19th St. 463-8634. Through March 28. . . . **joseph logan,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through March 28. . . . **patty martori,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through March 14. . . . **alice neel,** Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through April 25. . . . **thomas ruff,** 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through March 28. . . . **peter sarkisian,** I-20 Gallery, 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100. Through April 4. . . . **randy walz,** Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Through April 18.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Feng Mengbo—This young Chinese artist, in his first American solo exhibit, displays an impressive mastery of various media as he explores the relationship between family and the individual over several generations. The downstairs gallery's wall is dominated by the "Air Dry Series," a collection of bits of hand-molded paper, casts of body parts and everyday objects, and crude, nearly abstract renderings of old family photographs, which are attached to a fishnet by clothespins. "My Private Album" is an interactive CD-ROM based on the lives of various family members during the Cultural Revolution; it combines old photographs with musical excerpts and snatches of recorded voice. There's nothing new here, from a technical point of view, but Feng's work speaks with a refreshing, if rather earnest, candor. Through March 21. (Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777.)

Irene Hardwicke—A lovely, lovelorn, hymeneal show of oils on wood. The artist has covered the bodies of her pale and naked brides with magical botanical specimens and with folk wisdom and Biblical quotations in print so small that getting close enough to read them feels as intimate as kissing. Through March 30. (Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820.)

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)—"Blackboard Drawing, 1919-24," an unusual and rewarding exhibition devoted to the theosophist and educator. One of Steiner's colleagues got the idea of preserving some of the master's explanatory lecture sketches by placing black paper over the blackboards. Steiner didn't consider the results works of art, nor, apparently, did such contemporaries as Mondrian, Kandinsky, and Jawlensky, all of whom attended the lectures and were, to varying degrees, taken with the ideas. But in light of more recent "blackboard" art by Joseph Beuys and Cy Twombly, Steiner's preserved ephemera certainly do have a prescient look. Through March 21. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

Group Show—The Drawing Center's spring roundup features several artists strongly influenced by Surrealism: Leona Christie's biomorphic fantasies, daintily rendered in ballpoint pen, trace a direct ancestry to the psychosexual visions of Miró; Enrique Chagoya's use of nineteenth-century engravings as a background for bizarre hallucinations (such as a huge, eight-fingered hand rising in the middle of an old English print of Portsmouth Harbor) comes straight out of Max Ernst's collages. Jorge Nesbitt has created a weird suite of faux-Persian miniatures, with subjects such as a ceramic vulva on a pedestal, the floor around it littered with male sex organs. Stephen Sollins explores new frontiers in wispiness, cutting out extremely fine geometric grids from newspaper pages, tacked to the wall, which flutter with every passing breeze. Through March 28. (35 Wooster St. 219-2166.)

Short List—**michael ashkin,** Rosen, 130 Prince St. 941-0203. Through March 21. . . . **jennifer bornstein,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. 966-4480. Through March 14. . . . **christopher bucklow,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Through March 14. . . . **bernard chaet,** New York Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. 673-6466. Through April 4. . . . **dan flavin,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. 431-5160. Through March 14. . . . **ellen gallagher,** Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828. Through April 11. . . . **jane hammond,** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through March 21. . . . **gillian jagger,** Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200. Through March 28. . . . **steve keene,** CBGB Gallery, 313 Bowery. 677-0455. Through March 27. . . . **jenifer kobylarz,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880. Through April 4. . . . **michael lazarus,** Feature, 76 Greene St. 941-7077. Through March 28. . . . **christopher lucas,** McIntyre, 45 Crosby St. 334-9666. Through March 28. . . . **anissa mack,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. 941-5711. Through March 21. . . . **ruthard miksch,** Au Base, 433 W. 14th St. 414-0563. Through March 28. . . . **john l. moore,** M-13, at 72 Greene St. 925-3007. Through April 4. . . . **robert moskowitz,** Markey, 55 Vandam St. 627-4446. Through March 21. . . . **elizabeth olbert,** Golden, 39 Wooster St. 274-0080. Through April 4. . . . **daniel reynolds,** Deven Golden, 16 Mercer St. 334-3124. Through April 4. . . . **kenny scharf,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through March 14. . . . **bonell silverman,** Steele, 420 West Broadway. 941-8388. Through March 21. . . . **kate teale,** First New York: Staff Gallery, 495 Broadway. 925-9700. Through March 24. . . . **cindy towers,** Trans Hudson, 416 W. 13th St. 242-3232. Through March 14.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Nineteenth-century paintings, furniture, and decorative art. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000. March 11.) . . . At **christie's east:** On March 11, moderately priced twentieth-century paintings, sculptures, and other art works, by Calder, Dubuffet, and many others; on March 17, antiquities, souvenirs, and curiosities acquired by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers of the fashionable set who made the Grand Tour of Europe. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

Sotheby's—March 11: Impressionist, modern, and contemporary paintings, including works by Degas and Valtat. . . . ¶ March 13: Decorative works in the Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles. . . . ¶ March 14: Fine and collectible wines. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Doyle—March 11: Furniture, decorations, and paintings . . . . ¶ March 12: Small-scale collectibles, including lead soldiers, model trains, and antique dolls. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

Swann—A sale of historic Bibles, Judaica, and other early printed books. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. March 12.)

Armory Antiques Show—A hundred dealers offering antiques from all over. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. March 11-15. For information, call 472-1180.)

From the horse's mouth

A COMPLETELY UNSOLICITED testimonial appeared recently in A La Carte, the definitive mouthpiece of food and wine.

It was penned by Raymond Gardner and it concerned *"...the superbly mellow Macallan from Craigellachie in Banffshire, aged in sherry casks, a mellow miracle and to my mind the most sophisticated of the commonly-available Highland malts..."*

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The Macallan
12

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Ilse Bing—An exhibition of vintage prints in celebration of the photographer's ninety-ninth birthday. Through May 2. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070.)

Wayne F. Miller—"Way of Life of the Northern Negro in the United States," a selection of photographs from a series the artist made in Chicago in 1946 and 1947. In his images of silky jazz clubs (Duke and Ella at work), burlesque houses, intimate couples, and hard street life, Miller constructs an affecting portrait of diverse black-American communities. Through March 14. (De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

Burk Uzzle/Micha Bar-Am—"Daytona Bike Week," a thirty-year look at the tattooed Florida subculture./A small, powerful selection of social observations and unflinching war reportage by the Israeli photojournalist. (In conjunction with the retrospective at the International Center of Photography.) Both shows through March 14. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

"Art and the New Order"—A group show of photographs, drawings, and paintings by such Russian and Italian avant-gardistes as Malevich, Klutsis, Balla, and Rodchenko. Through April 18. (Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363.)

"Larry Burrows at War: Vietnam, 1962-71"/"In Country: Vietnam Revisited"—Thirty color and black-and-white pictures by the intrepid war photographer, who was killed in action./Photographs taken since 1993 by Mitch Epstein, Lois Conner, An-My Lê, and Abby Robinson. Both shows through April 11. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

"Requiem: By the Photographers Who Died in Vietnam and Indochina"—A large travelling exhibition that includes work by Robert Capa, Larry Burrows, Sean Flynn, Tran Bihn Khuol, Dickey Chapelle, and Taizo Ichinose. Through May 2. (Newseum, 580 Madison Ave., at 57th St. 317-7596. Open Mondays.)

International Center of Photography—"Micha Bar-Am: An Israeli Photobiography." (See listing above.) Through May 31. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Robert Capa: Photographs," a retrospective of the war correspondent's career. Starts March 14. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**andrew bush**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through April 4. . . . **robert cumming**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through April 4. . . . **andreas feininger**, SoHo Triad Fine Arts, 107 Grand St. 965-9500. Open daily; through April 12. . . . **lois guarino**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through March 14. . . . **craig kalpakjian**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through March 28. . . . **jan lukas**, Czech Center New York, 1109 Madison Ave., at 83rd St. 288-0830. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9 to 5; through March 18. . . . **luis mallo**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through March 14. . . . **august sander**, Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through April 25. . . . **tokihiro sato**, Tonkonow, 601 W. 26th St. 255-8450. Through April 25. . . . **david smith**, Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through April 18. . . . **paul strand**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through April 4. . . . **karl struss**, Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Through March 28. . . . **susan unterberg**, Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through April 4. . . . **jeff wall**, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. Open Mondays; through March 14. . . . **meg webster**, Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753. Through April 18. . . . **jocko weyland**, Martz, 524 W. 20th St. 206-3686. Through March 14. . . . **ernest withers**, Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Closed Tuesdays, opens at noon; through March 14.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**l'elisir d'amore**, with Ruth Ann Swenson, Luciano Pavarotti, Roberto de Candia, and Paul Plishka; conducted by Maurizio Benini. (March 11 at 8 and March 14 at 1:30.) . . . **madama butterfly**, with Catherine Malfitano, Wendy White, Richard Leech, and Alan Opie; Carlo Rizzi. (March 12 at 8.) . . . **lohengrin**, with Deborah Voigt, Deborah Polaski, Ben Heppner, and Eric Halfvarson; James Levine. (March 13 and March 17 at 7.) . . . **samson et dalila**, with Denyce Graves, Mark Baker, and Sergei Leiferkus; Leonard Slatkin. (March 14 at 8.) . . . **roméo et juliette**, with Angela Gheorghiu, Kristine Jepson, Roberto Alagna, Russell Braun, and Robert Lloyd; Bertrand de Billy. (March 16 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—**le nozze di figaro.** (March 11 and March 17 at 7:30 and March 14 at 8.) . . . **madama butterfly.** (March 12 at 7:30 and March 15 at 1:30.) . . . **la bohème.** (March 13 at 8 and March 14 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Mannes Opera—Presenting Bellini's "I Capuleti e i Montecchi," with Gabriel Guimerães conducting. (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. March 15 at 7; and March 17, March 19, and March 21, all at 8. For information about tickets, call 229-5488.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

Orchestra of St. Luke's—The composer Tan Dun leads his own "Symphony 1997 (Heaven, Earth, Mankind)," featuring cellist Yo-Yo Ma and the American Boychoir. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 11 at 8.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Lyndon Woodside leads Verdi's Requiem, with the Westchester Philharmonic and several soloists. (Carnegie Hall. March 11 at 8.)

San Francisco Symphony—At Carnegie Hall, Michael Tilson Thomas conducting. March 12 at 8: Mahler's Symphony No. 6. . . . ¶ March 13 at 8: Copland's "Orchestral Variations," Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Jean-Yves Thibaudet), and Stravinsky's "The Firebird."

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Roussel's Concerto for Small Orchestra, Mendelssohn's E-Minor Violin Concerto (with Elmar Oliveira), Barbara Kolb's "Voyants" (with pianist Michael Boriskin), and Haydn's Symphony No. 88. (Alice Tully Hall. March 14 at 8 and March 15 at 5.)

Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble—Everyone acknowledges the exalted position occupied in the musical hierarchy by the mid-Renaissance Flemish master Josquin des Prés, but until a couple of years ago he was far more discussed than performed. A spate of recent disks has filled startling gaps in the recorded catalogue, and historically inclined choruses are increasingly programming his Masses and motets. In this all-Josquin program, Susanne Peck leads his "Pange Lingua" Mass, several of his motets, a group of his French songs, and his "Déploration de la Mort de Johannes Ockeghem," the expressive lament he composed on the death of his teacher. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. March 14 at 8. . . . ¶ Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. March 15 at 7:30. For information about tickets for either concert, call 774-4105.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble performs Telemann's "Don Quixote" Suite, Britten's "Les Illuminations" (with soprano Benita Valente), and Bach's Double Concerto for Violin and Oboe. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. March 15 at 3. For information about tickets, call 896-1704.)

BOOK CURRENTS

The Ould Sod

When it comes to things Irish, there's what might be called the shamrock approach and then there's the Celtic-cross approach. It's the latter view, historic rather than touristic, that Rosemary Mahoney subscribes to when discussing works of Irish literature. Mahoney, an American nonfiction writer and the author of **Whoredom in Kimmage: Irish Women Coming of Age** (Doubleday), gravitates toward books that evoke the distinctive particularities of life on the not always gemlike Emerald Isle. For poetry, she recommends **The Haw Lantern** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), by Seamus Heaney, and **Pharaoh's Daughter** (Wake Forest University Press), by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, a poet who writes in Irish and whose work has been translated by Heaney. In fiction, she admires William Trevor's **Collected Stories** (Penguin) and Edna O'Brien's 1990 collection of short stories, **Lantern Slides** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

Delving into less familiar territory, Mahoney cites **Peig: The Autobiography of Peig Sayers of the Great Blasket Island** (Syracuse University Press), an Irish classic written in the nineteen-thirties by an old woman who lived off the coast of Kerry. Mahoney finds an older essay on the Irish even more valuable: Edmund Spenser's **A View of the Present State of Ireland** (1633), in which, she says, the great poet characterized the Irish as "truly impossible to civilize without resorting to brute force." She feels the book gives "a great picture of where the seeds of the present resentment lie."

Although she admits it's an obvious choice, Mahoney is compelled to mention "Ulysses," which she first read in a course taught by the renowned literary critic Hugh Kenner. She recommends **Ulysses Annotated** (University of California Press), which was edited by Don Gifford and is keyed to both the Gabler edition, which came out in 1984 (and sparked controversy because of Gabler's "corrections"), and the 1961 Random House edition. Joyce's pungent, sometimes disorienting, verisimilitude never fails to astound Mahoney: "I don't know how anybody who doesn't already know Ireland understands the book."

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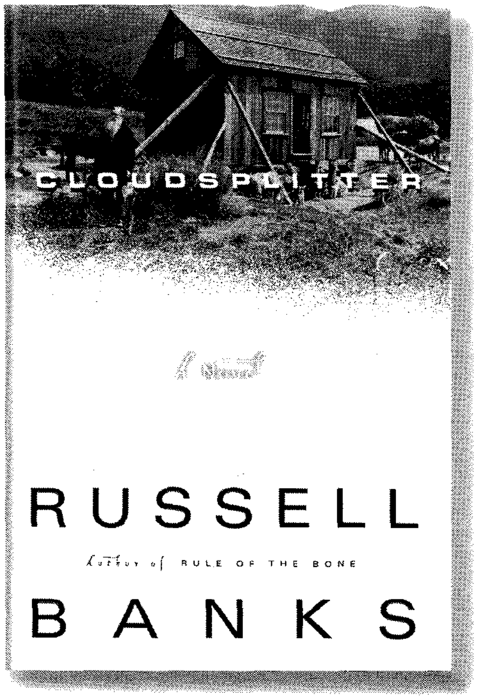
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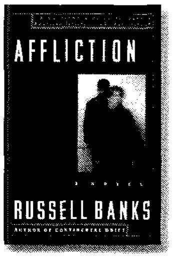
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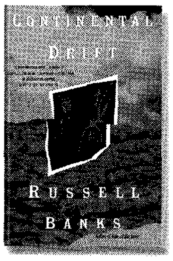
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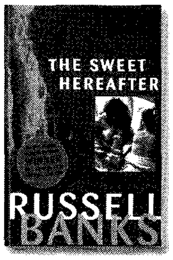
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BachWorks—Richard Erickson directs the chorus in Bach's motets "Jesu, meine Freude" and "Singet dem Herrn," in a concert that also includes his F-Minor Violin Sonata (played by violinist Jörg-Michael Schwarz and harpsichordist Bradley Brookshire). (St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. March 15 at 5. Tickets at the door.)

BBC Symphony Orchestra—Andrew Davis conducts Ravel's "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales," Strauss's "Four Last Songs" (featuring soprano Felicity Lott), and Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique." (Avery Fisher Hall. March 16 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Hermann Prey—The baritone, having called in sick for last year's Schubertiade at the 92nd Street Y, adds a postscript to that festival by performing a selection of Schubert's last songs, including the valedictory "Schwanengesang" collection. James Levine assists at the piano. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 11 at 8.)

Sergio Fiorentino—The septuagenarian pianist, who has spent much of his career teaching in Italy, after being seriously injured in a plane crash, has recently taken highly acclaimed steps toward reëstablishing the strong impression he made as a young prizewinner fifty years ago. In this recital, he performs the Bach-Busoni Prelude and Fugue in D Major, Beethoven's Sonata in A-Flat Major (Op. 110), and Schumann's C-Major Fantasy. (Alice Tully Hall. March 11 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Cellist Fred Sherry, electric guitarist Steve Mackey, and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott offer works by Takemitsu, Wuorinen, Debussy, and Bach. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. March 12 at 7:30 and March 15 at 4.)

Ursula Oppens—The pianist is currently embarked on a three-year project to perform all thirty-two of Beethoven's sonatas, with twentieth-century American works sprinkled among them. This installment features two Beethoven Sonatas in B-Flat Major—Op. 22 and Op. 106, the monumental, ever-modern "Hammerklavier"—as well as Carter's Piano Sonata (composed in 1946). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 12 at 8.)

Andrew Lawrence-King and Paul O'Dette—The Baroque harpist and the lutenist-guitarist-theorbo player, both of whom have gained renown for exploring the historical nooks and crannies of the early plucked-string repertoire, come together to perform seventeenth-century toccatas, variations, and improvisational works, by Biagio Marini, Frescobaldi, Gaspar Sanz, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. March 12 at 8.)

Eroica Trio—The ensemble performs piano trios by Gershwin (arrangements of his Three Preludes for Piano), Ravel, and Brahms (his Second, in C Major). (Alice Tully Hall. March 12 at 8.)

"Viol Madness"—Viola da gamba players Mary Springfels and Lisa Terry, assisted by harpsichordist James Richman, perform music by Marais and others. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6100. March 12 at 8.)

Messiaen in Motion—Organist Stephen Hamilton plays Messiaen's four-movement suite "L'Ascension," in a staged collaboration with Dance at Holy Trinity that includes choreography by Lynn Parkerson. Also on the program is a work danced to music by Couperin. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. March 12-14 at 8.)

John Aler—The tenor, a fixture of the New York concert scene, launches a three-concert series of song and ensemble concerts. In the opening installment, he's joined by soprano Faith Esham and pianist Warren Jones, for a tour through songs by no fewer than nineteen American and British composers. (Weill Recital Hall. March 13 at 8.)

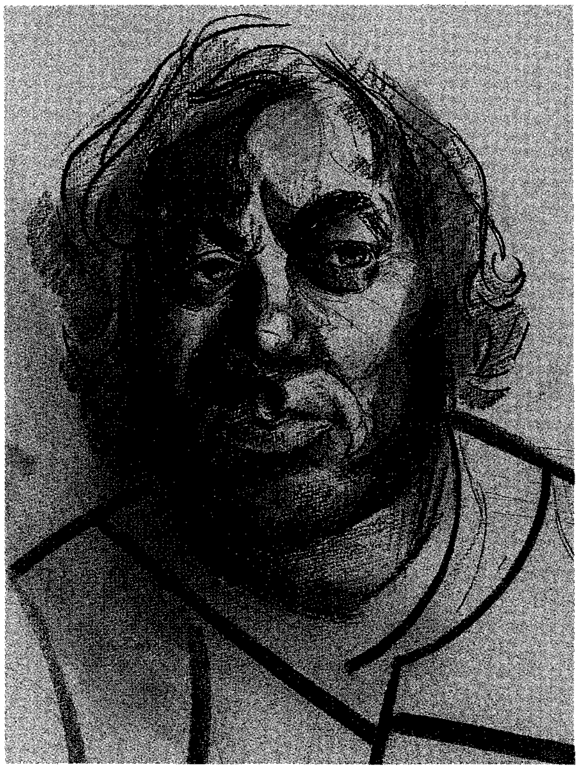
Yo-Yo Ma—The cellist plays Bach's Unaccompanied Suites. March 14 at 5: The Suites No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3. . . . ¶ At 8: The Suites No. 4, No. 5, and No. 6. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. For information about tickets, call 721-6500.)

Richard Goode—In his only New York recital of the season, the distinguished pianist performs Bach's C-Minor Partita, Beethoven's E-Flat-Major Sonata (Op. 31, No. 3), Schumann's C-Major Fantasy, and several works by Debussy (four of his Préludes, as well as "L'Isle Joyeuse"). (Carnegie Hall. March 14 at 7:30.)

Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg—The violinist, with pianist Cécile Licad, offers sonatas by Bolcom (his Third) and Ravel; soprano Judy Blazer and pianist Leslie Stifelman perform songs by Gershwin, Rodgers, and Jule Styne. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 14 at 8.)

Ben Heppner—The tenor sings arias by Haydn, Massenet, Mozart, Weber, Wagner, and Strauss; assisted by the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Julius Rudel conducting. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 15 at 3.)

Ian Bostridge—Here's a rarity: a tenor *and* a scholar. His light, boyish tenor, combined with a good ear for languages and a sense for the subtleties of poetry, has earned him a place of honor among the decade's newly emerged lieder singers, but he also happens to hold a doctorate in history from Oxford, and recently published a tome on the history of witchcraft in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. In his New York début recital, he is joined by pianist Julius Drake to perform two of Schumann's greatest song collections, the "Liederkreis" (Op. 24) and "Dichterliebe." (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. March 15 at 5.)



Pianist Richard Goode, in recital at Carnegie Hall.

DAVID TOMB

Pulse Percussion Ensemble—Composer Henry Brant leads the group in his own "Dormant Craters," an exemplar of his method of "spatial" composition, in which the performers are distributed throughout an environment. The recital also includes music by John Cage, Babatunde Olatunji, and others. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. March 16 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

ModernWorks!—This "new" new-music group, founded just a year ago by the cellist Madeleine Shapiro, presents works by Xenakis, Wuorinen, and Karen Tanaka, as well as two premières: Ge Gan-ru's String Quartet No. 4 ("Angel Suite") and David Rakowski's "Rowell Come Back Now" (for electric violin). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. March 16 at 8.)

Ensemble Sospeso—The Seattle-based modern-music group, conducted by Jeffrey Milarsky, offers Harrison Birtwistle's "Tragoedia" (a pivotal score in the composer's career, written in 1965), Berio's "Sequenza VII" (for oboe), and works by Kirk Noreen and Joshua Cody. (Weill Recital Hall. March 16 at 8.)

Seymour Lipkin—The pianist offers Beethoven's Sonatas in A Major (Op. 2, No. 2), C Minor (Op. 13), G Major (Op. 79), and E Major (Op. 109). (Lang Recital Hall, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. March 17 at 7.)

Bo Skovhus—The Danish baritone, with pianist Warren Jones, offers songs by Schubert, including his "Schwanengesang." (Temple of Dendur, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 17 at 8.)

Eliza Garth—Performing piano works by Hayes Biggs, Arthur Berger, Donald Martino, Perry Goldstein, and Schoenberg. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. March 17 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Irish Arts—The Architectural League of New York's modest exhibit about urban renewal in Dublin, Ireland, offers an antidote to the plastic shamrocks, green beer, and other bits of Hibernian kitsch that make an inevitable appearance around St. Patrick's Day. Its focus is the Temple Bar district, a formerly run-down stretch of the inner city, on the southern bank of the River Liffey, that had been slated to be razed to make way for a transportation center. But in the early nineties the Irish government decided instead to capitalize on the neighborhood's architectural heritage and growing population of artists. Group 91, a consortium of young Dublin architectural firms, won a competition to redevelop the area, emphasizing its cultural nature. This collection of the group's designs for public squares, a multimedia center, a children's arts center, and a photography center, among other works, is perhaps most remarkable because it includes photographs of the finished buildings. Renewal, in this case, took only a few years. Talk about the luck of the Irish. (Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave., at 50th St. 935-3960. Through April 29.)

Readings—March 11 at 6:30: By actors Fritz Weaver, Blair Brown, and Mary Beth Hurt, from the stories of William Maxwell, Lynne Sharon Schwartz, and Tess Gallagher. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 8: By Patrick McGrath, from his novel "Asylum"; Barry Yourgrau, from his short-story collection, "The Sadness of Sex"; and Joanna Torrey, from her novella "Hungry." (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 16 at 7:30: By poets Michael O'Brien and Hugh Seidman. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—March 15 at 2: Following a screening of his latest film, "The Newton Boys," the director Richard Linklater talks about his career. (American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave at 36th St., Astoria. 718-784-0077.) . . . ¶ March 17 at 6: Novelist Gore Vidal holds forth on the subjects of irony and satire. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

THE MOVIES

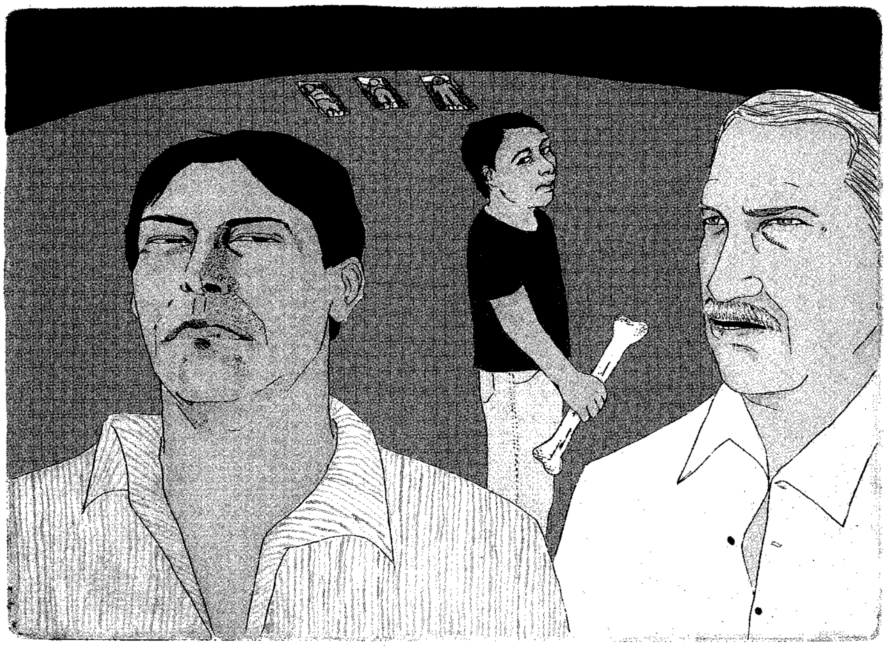
OPENINGS

Chairman of the Board—A comedy about a madcap inventor (Carrot Top) who inherits a wealthy American corporation and must then save it from failure. With Courtney Thorne-Smith, Larry Miller, and Raquel Welch. Directed by Alex Zamm. Opening March 13. (Village East Cinemas.)

Funny Games—A psychological thriller about an Austrian family, vacationing at their lakeside home, who are threatened physically and emotionally by two young men who hold them captive. Written and directed by Michael Haneke. In German. Opening March 11. (Film Forum.)

The Man in the Iron Mask—Leonardo DiCaprio in the title role, as well as that of Louis XIV. Also with Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich, Gérard Depardieu, Gabriel Byrne, Anne Parillaud, and Judith Godreche. Written and directed by Randall Wallace, based on the Dumas novel. Opening March 13. (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Post Coitum—Brigitte Roüan wrote, directed, and stars in the bittersweet tale of a forty-year-old book editor who leaves her family when she falls in love with a young engineer in his twenties. In French. Opening March 13. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)



At Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, John Sayles's "Men with Guns."

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Afterglow—Julie Christie stars in the unlikely role of a former B-movie actress married to a small-time handyman (Nick Nolte) who dabbles big-time in infidelity. He gets involved with a fetching young thing (Lara Flynn Boyle) married to a career-obsessed yuppie (Jonny Lee Miller), and the yuppie picks up Christie at a hotel bar; all manner of droll carryings-on ensue. Written and directed by Alan Rudolph, who can't seem to decide whether the film is a stylized French farce or a Pinteresque drama of disconnection.—*Daphne Merkin* (1/19/98) (Regency.)

The Apostle—Produced, written, and directed by its star, Robert Duvall, this film addresses without condescension or glibness a subject—religious conviction—that Hollywood generally caricatures. Duvall plays Sonny, a charismatic Pentecostal preacher on the run from the police. Duvall's performance is so passionate that it's almost eerie: is Sonny acting him or is he acting Sonny? The supporting players include Farrah Fawcett, John Beasley, June Carter Cash, Miranda Richardson, and Billy Bob Thornton.—*D.M.* (2/2/98) (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

As Good as It Gets—A romantic comedy directed and co-written (with Mark Andrus) by James L. Brooks, in which an improbable trio overcomes a heap of troubles and finds collective happiness, sitcom style. Jack Nicholson stars as a romance novelist with a seriously alienating manner, Helen Hunt is a waitress with a young son who has a life-threatening disease, and Greg Kinnear is a gay painter with a sweet smile and no visible erotic attachments. You keep expecting to hear a laugh track.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Big Lebowski—A comedy from the writer-director team of Joel and Ethan Coen about mistaken identity and a million-dollar kidnapping. With Jeff Bridges, John Goodman, Julianne Moore, and Steve Buscemi. (Beekman, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Borrowers—It's surprising that filmmakers have only recently latched onto Mary Norton's endearing tales of the Borrowers—miniature humans, six inches high, who live under floorboards and behind wainscots of English houses. On the other hand, it takes the latest technology to do them justice: witness the scene, early in Peter Hewitt's movie, when Pod (Jim Broadbent), the gallant head of a Borrower family, springs around a full-sized kitchen and lands in the ice dispenser. Hewitt wraps the family in a slice of overheated hokum, involving a ravenous villain (John Goodman) and a pest exterminator, but violent slapstick and low scatological gags seem way out of place here; the Borrowers are most entertaining, and most true to themselves, when they are simply hanging out, dining off a single pea or hiding among the toy soldiers in a child's bedroom. They move from a dusky English cottage to a neat suburban street, but behind them looms a surreal cityscape that suggests an H. G. Wells fantasy of the future. Small world, huh?—*Anthony Lane* (Chelsea Cinemas and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Dangerous Beauty—The life of the sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan Veronica Franco (Catherine McCormack) is the basis for this drama directed by Marshall Herskovitz. With Rufus Sewell, Jacqueline Bisset, and Oliver Platt. (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Square, and 64th and 2nd.)

Dark City—Around midnight, in a shabby, Edward Hopper-esque metropolis, Nosferatu-like ghouls (with hissing British accents) put all the human beings to sleep and experiment on them. The ghouls are onto something interesting, if a little abstract: What happens if you fill one person's memory bank with someone else's memories? Rufus Sewell stars as the one victim with the power to resist. With Jennifer Connelly as his wife (or so she thinks, though even this memory could be fake) and Kiefer Sutherland as a doctor coöpted by the ghouls. Written and directed, with perhaps too much attention to special effects, by Alex Proyas.—*Sarah Kerr* (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Deconstructing Harry—Woody Allen casts himself as a famous Jewish novelist who ridicules and cheats on women and then appropriates their life stories for his fiction. As a director, Allen seems to be shooting for a new style of ruthless honesty: the film's tone is almost abusively dark. But clear away the pseudo-profound talk about the immorality of genius and all you're left with is a bunch of celebrity cameos and outdated gags.—*S.K.* (The Screening Room.)

The Dirty Dozen (1967)—This Second World War adventure cannily, if chaotically, reworked the formula of having a tough major (Lee Marvin) mold a bunch of misfit fighting men into a crack unit and lead them on a perilous raid behind enemy lines. The twist: they've all been convicted of violent crimes and would prefer a "suicide mission" (and the possibility of amnesty) to hanging or life imprisonment. The director, Robert Aldrich, excels at action and male bonding but stumbles over ironies; he stages routine slapstick to the tune of "You're in the Army Now." Still, the film has a cynical gusto. With Charles Bronson, John Cassavetes, Donald Sutherland, Ernest Borgnine, Robert Ryan, and Jim Brown. Nunnally Johnson and Lukas Heller adapted E. M. Nathanson's novel.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; March 13.)

The Full Monty—An amiable light comedy, directed by Peter Cattaneo, about six unemployed British steelworkers who mount an all-male strip show for cash. The script, by Simon Beaufoy, is clean and well developed. Each character is given his bit to do, and when the motley crew comes together the actors all work wonderfully with one another, finding a sexy, warm performance rhythm as they gyrate to some classic seventies disco. Two of the actors—Mark Addy, who plays an overweight, insecure worker, and Robert Carlyle, as the ringleader—are sensational.—*Bruce Diones* (Art Greenwich Twin, Olympia, and Sutton.)

The Gingerbread Man—Directed by Robert Altman, from an original story by John Grisham, this noirish thriller shrouds its conventional plot with some wonderful Altmanesque ambience. Set in Savannah, it features Kenneth Branagh as a savvy, divorced attorney who picks up the wrong woman (Embeth Davidtz) one rainy night and is so taken by her apparent vulnerability that he sets about destroying

LARA TOMLIN

his own life in order to protect hers. Altman's celebrated skill at allowing his actors room gives the picture a loopy, uncontrived flow that is rare for this genre. With Robert Duvall and Robert Downey, Jr.—*D.M.* (2/2/98) (59th Street East Cinema.)

Good Will Hunting—Matt Damon plays a belligerent working-class genius from South Boston who's been abused in foster homes and is now being given a chance to triumph over his past; Robin Williams is the maverick shrink who helps him understand his demons, and Minnie Driver is the unsnobbish Harvard girlfriend who tries to heal him with acceptance. If it sounds treacly, it's not, thanks to a honed script (co-written by Damon and Ben Affleck, who plays Damon's best pal), subtle performances, and surprisingly warm direction by Gus Van Sant.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, and State.)

Great Expectations—Don't have any. This update of Dickens—the Pip character grows up to be a celebrity artist in the Big Apple—has to be one of the most ludicrously dumbed-down versions of a classic in years. But, as directed by Alfonso Cuarón ("A Little Princess"), it's so visually stunning that it's almost gripping in its incoherence. With Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow, Robert De Niro, and Anne Bancroft (two parts Melina Mercouri, one part Carol Channing).—*D.M.* (Ziegfeld.)

Hush—A thriller involving a young bride (Gwyneth Paltrow), her husband (Johnathon Schaech), and his possessive mother (Jessica Lange). Directed by Jonathan Darby. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Kundun—Martin Scorsese's examination of the early life of the Dalai Lama. The film is far too long, and viewers may be frustrated by its frequently shifting tone; yet, in a way, a shifting tone is just the right treatment for a religion that emphasizes serene detachment over emotion. And, visually, this may be the director's richest feast since "Raging Bull."—*S.K.* (Guild and Village East Cinemas.)

Kwaidan (1964)—Based on Lafcadio Hearn's Japanese folk tales, Masaki Kobayashi's acclaimed four-part anthology of ghost stories resembles the languorously haunting high kitsch of Powell and Pressburger's "The Tales of Hoffmann." Kobayashi painted the expressionistic sets himself, worked out the splashy mood lighting, and, most important, coördinated the visual elements with the innovative music of Toru Takemitsu. The composer rooted his score in such indigenous Japanese sounds as the striking of certain hard stones that—according to one authority—are found only on the island of Shikoku. The results tickle the ear and tingle the spine. The cast includes Tatsuya Nakadai, Rentaro Mikuni, and Katsuo Nakamura. In Japanese.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; March 11-12.)

L.A. Confidential—Curtis Hanson's thriller, set in Los Angeles in the early fifties, is about a group of cops who between them cover the full moral range, from the uptight integrity of Ed Exley (Guy Pearce) to the four-star sadism of Bud White (Russell Crowe). The plot, adapted from the James Ellroy novel, is both murky and tangled, yet the movie never bogs down. Hanson paces the tale with ease, decorating it with one neat performance after another: James Cromwell as the smiling police chief, David Strathairn as an oily pimp, Kim Basinger as one of his prize charges, and, best of all, Kevin Spacey as a "celebrity crime-stopper" who gets dragged into the dark and dirty.—*A.L.* (9/22/97) (Art Greenwich Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, and 34th Street Showplace.)

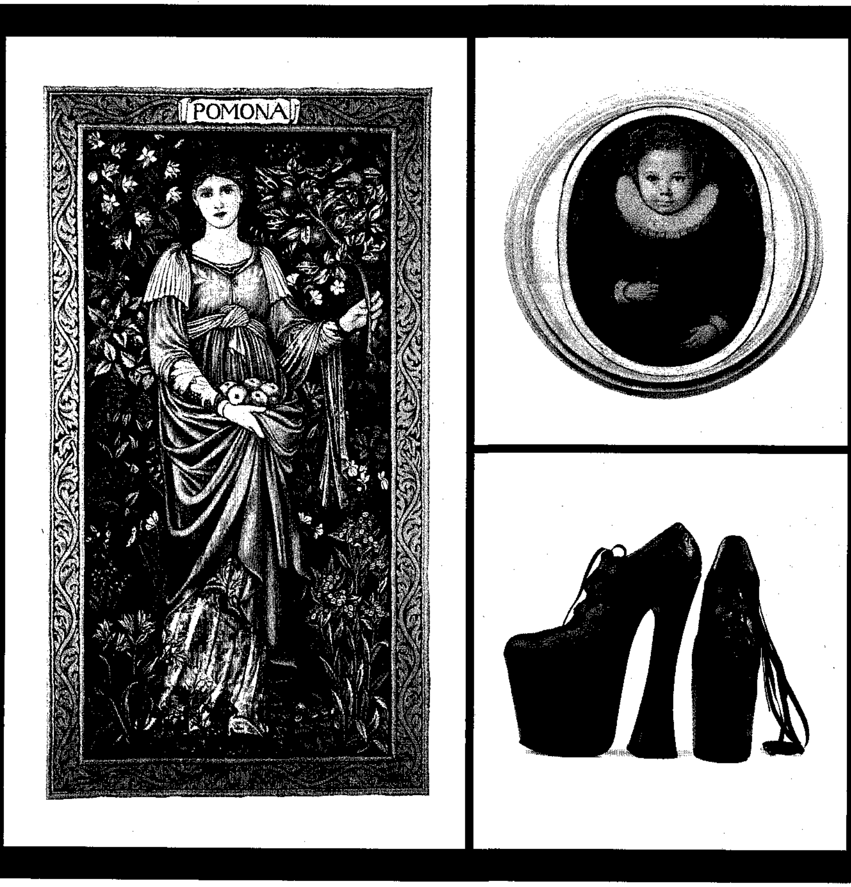
Live Flesh—Half an hour into Pedro Almodóvar's new film and you're already up to your chin in blood and lust. The farce is played, as usual, with impassioned gravity, yet is somehow bereft of the high spirits that used to grace the director's films. With Liberto Rabal, Francesca Neri, and Javier Bardem. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (1/26/98) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Love and Death on Long Island—This quirky comedy of romantic obsession presents the fragile and familiar predicament of an older man's attraction to a good-looking, younger man without steeping it in sentimentality or tagging it as explicitly homoerotic. With John Hurt and Jason Priestley; written and directed by Richard Kwietniowski.—*D.M.* (3/9/98) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Men with Guns—John Sayles's film follows a Latin-American doctor as he looks for seven of his former students who have gone to work in remote villages. In Spanish and Indian languages. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Mrs. Dalloway—With Marleen Gorris ("Antonia's Line") as director, Eileen Atkins as screenwriter, and Vanessa Redgrave in the title role, the near-impossible is achieved: Virginia Woolf's lyrical evocation of life-as-flux is safely transferred to the screen, helped by an evocative soundtrack, well-edited flashbacks, and an adroit substitution of voice-over for the novel's interior monologues. The supporting performances—by John Standing, Margaret Tyzack, Amelia Bullmore, and Rupert Graves, among others—are a triumph of ensemble acting.—*D.M.* (2/16/98) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Nil by Mouth—Gary Oldman's first feature as writer and director is set in South London, and its story line couldn't be simpler: Ray (Ray Winstone) is self-destructing on drink and drugs and becoming a menace to his wife (Kathy Burke), her dull brother (Charlie Creed-Miles), and the rest of



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Clockwise from left: Sir Edward Burne-Jones and John Henry Dearle, Pomona, *about 1900. Tapestry-woven wool and silk on a cotton warp. V&A T.33-1981. Isaac Oliver,* Girl Aged Five, Holding a Carnation, *1590, one of a* Pair of Miniatures. *Watercolor on vellum in an ivory frame. Bequeathed by George Salting. V&A P.146-1910. Vivienne Westwood, platform shoes, autumn/winter 1993-94. Bright blue punched "mock-croc" leather and blue silk ribbon laces. Given by Vivienne Westwood. V&A T.225:1&2-1993. All images © Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

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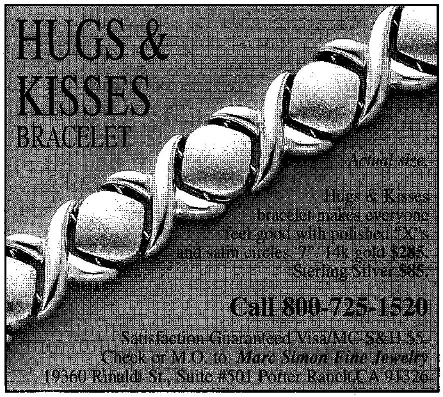

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the clan. Oldman, who grew up in a world like this, makes Ray's bestial spasms hard to watch, but the film hangs around in your brain.—*A.L.* (2/9/98) (Village East Cinemas.)

The Replacement Killers—In his American début, the Hong Kong action star Chow Yun-Fat plays a hit man assigned to kill a little boy. He's reluctant to harm a child, so, with the help of a tough-with-a-heart-of-gold faker of passports (Mira Sorvino), he goes on the lam. Chow is one of the most photogenic men on earth, but, removed from the Hong Kong setting, all the choreographed murder feels dull, poorly paced, and, come to think of it, pretty demented. Antoine Fuqua directed.—*S.K.* (State.)

Sphere—Barry Levinson films Michael Crichton's thriller about a hack psychiatrist (Dustin Hoffman) who once wrote a sloppy government report on how to handle an alien encounter. Now a weird-looking ship is found at the bottom of the sea, and he and the response team he recommended (including Sharon Stone as a biochemist and Samuel L. Jackson as a mathematician) are recruited to check it out. At times the film verges comically on white-male paranoia: Jackson starts acting uppity, and Stone becomes a psychotic seeking revenge on Hoffman for an old affair that turned sour. Still, Levinson is terrific at claustrophobia. In fact, this doesn't resemble any of his previous films so much as it does his gripping TV series, "Homicide."—*S.K.* (Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Sweet Hereafter—An exquisitely sober movie by Atom Egoyan, based on the novel by Russell Banks. Ian Holm holds the screen with volcanic force as a big-city lawyer trying to bring a class-action suit on behalf of a small blue-collar town in the wake of a school-bus accident. The cast is uniformly good, and Sarah Polley, as a paralyzed survivor of the crash, is extraordinary.—*D.M.* (11/24/97) (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Titanic—At well over three hours, James Cameron's grand new picture has plenty of romance to get through before it breaks the vessel in half. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the freewheeling Jack, who wins a steerage ticket and finds himself falling for the wealthy Rose (Kate Winslet), to the disapproval of her mother (Frances Fisher) and her brute of a fiancé (Billy Zane). The social animus of the story, like its imaginative majesty, is Dickensian; this all feels like two hundred million dollars well spent.—*A.L.* (12/15/97) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

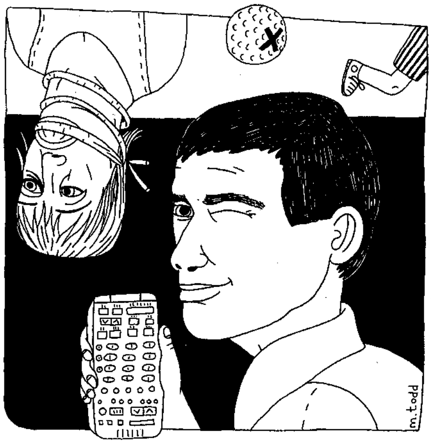
Twilight—A Los Angeles murder mystery directed and co-written (with Richard Russo) by Robert Benton, and starring Paul Newman, Susan Sarandon, and Gene Hackman. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, 72nd Street East, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

U.S. Marshals—Marshal Sam Gerard (Tommy Lee Jones) and his partner (Robert Downey, Jr.) go after a fugitive assassin (Wesley Snipes) in a chase thriller directed by Stuart Baird. (Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Wag the Dog—Barry Levinson's comedy about the politics of spin control, from a screenplay by David Mamet and Hilary Henkin. The premise involves a Presidential incumbent caught in a sex scandal less than two weeks before Election Day. Robert De Niro plays a Machiavellian spinmeister who devises a fake war and hires a Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman) to orchestrate it. The movie is very clever, but its tone of gleeful sendup never takes you beyond what you already know.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Lincoln Square, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Wedding Singer—A romantic comedy in which everything twinkles, from the credits to Adam Sandler's eyes. Sandler is Robbie Hart, once the spandex-clad lead singer of a high-school rock group, now a master of ceremonies at color-coördinated weddings in Connecticut. Drew Barrymore is a waitress who enlists his help in planning her nuptials with a junk-bond trader who clearly doesn't deserve her; she and Robbie—you guessed it—fall for each other. Long patches of the film are hilarious, and might make you nostalgic for life in the 'burbs, even if you grew up in the city. Directed by Frank Coraci, from a screenplay by Tim Herlihy.—*D.M.* (Cinema I, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Wings of the Dove—The director Iain Softley's adaptation of Henry James's magisterial late novel starts out as a jazzy, confident effort. But it gets a bit sluggish with the entrance of Milly Theale (Alison Elliott), the rich, good-hearted American orphan whom the penniless Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter) persuades her lover, Merton Densher (Linus Roache), to seduce in order to secure their future together. Elliott doesn't have the depth to convey Milly's galvanizing goodness, and this deficiency threatens to undo the film, despite its glorious costumes and all that golden Venice light.—*D.M.* (11/10/97) (First & 62nd Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)



Opening March 11 at Film Forum, Michael Haneke's "Funny Games."

MARK TODD

ALSO PLAYING

An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn: Village East Cinemas. . . . **Anastasia:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life:** Quad Cinema. . . . **Boogie Nights** (reviewed in our issue of 10/13/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Caught Up:** Criterion Center and Orpheum VII. . . . **For Richer or Poorer:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **The Ice Storm** (9/29/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Jackie Brown** (1/12/98): Embassy 2. . . . **John Grisham's The Rainmaker:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Kissing a Fool:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly. . . . **Kiss the Girls** (10/13/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Krippendorf's Tribe:** Cinema 3rd Avenue, Embassy 3, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6. . . . **Leather Jacket Love Story:** Quad Cinema. . . . **Ma Vie en Rose:** Quad Cinema and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **Mrs. Brown** (8/4/97): Village East Cinemas. . . . **Moon over Broadway:** Film Forum. . . . **Palmetto:** Chelsea Cinemas. . . . **A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese Through American Movies:** Gotham Cinema. . . . **The Real Blonde:** Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Waverly. . . . **Scream 2:** Embassy 2. . . . **Senseless:** 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **Shampoo Horns:** Quad Cinema. . . . **Tomorrow Never Dies:** Worldwide Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through March 12: "Rashomon" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese)....From March 13: "Mean Streets" (1973, Martin Scorsese).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—From March 12: A program of films directed by Otto Preminger....¶March 12 at 6: One program in a series about the history of 8-mm. films and videos in the United States....¶March 13 at 3: "Primary" (1960, Richard Leacock, D. A. Pennebaker, Albert Maysles, T. McCartney-Filgate, and Robert Drew)....¶March 13 at 6: "Sweet Smell of Success" (1957, Alexander Mackendrick)....¶March 13 at 8: "The Dirty Dozen" (†)....¶March 13 at 8: "Dog Star Man" (1964, Stan Brakhage)....¶March 14-15 at 2: "The Little Fugitive" (1953, Ray Ashley, Morris Engel, and Ruth Orkin)....¶March 14 at 5: "The Band Wagon" (1953, Vincente Minnelli)....¶March 16 at 6:30: "Divinity Gratis" (1996, Betzy Bromberg)....¶March 17 at 2:30 and 6: "The General Line" (1929, Sergei Eisenstein; a Russian silent film).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films for which Toru Takemitsu wrote the music; all in Japanese, with English subtitles. March 11 at 2 and March 12 at 5: "Antonio Gaudi" (1985, Hiroshi Teshigahara)....March 11 at 3:30 and 9: Four short films with music by Takemitsu....March 11 at 6 and March 12 at 2 and 9: "Kwaidan" (†)....¶March 12 at 6:30: "Brother Tied" (1997, Derek Cianfrance)....¶From March 13: A program of new films from France; all in French, with English subtitles....¶ Weekend showings for children. March 14 at 2: "Danny, the Champion of the World" (1989, Gavin Millar).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed by Richard Linklater. March 14 at 2: "Dazed and Confused" (1993)....March 14 at 4: "Suburbia" (1996).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). March 15 at 7, the feature will be "A Star Is Born" (1954, George Cukor).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through March 31: "Promise" (1986, Glenn Jordan). (Showings Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 and 4; Thursdays and Fridays at 2, 4, and 6.)

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Films in French (with English subtitles) from various countries. March 13 at 6:30: "Une Vie Suspendue" (1985, Jocelyne Saab; Lebanon)....March 13 at 8:30: "Ashakara" (1992, Gérard Louvain; Togo and Switzerland)....March 14 at noon: "Mr. Foot" (1991, Jean-Marie Teno; Cameroon), "Birth of Democracy" (1991, Bassek Ba Khobio; Cameroon), and "Belep Danse Autour de la Terre" (1990, Jean-Louis Comolli; no English subtitles; New Caledonia)....March 14 at 2:15: "Angano, Angano" (1989, César Paes; in Malagasy; Madagascar) and "Matamata and Pilipili" (1996, Tristan Bourland; Congo and Belgium)....March 14 at 4:45: "Reinette l'Oranaise" (1991, Jacqueline Gozlan; no English subtitles; Algeria and France)....March 14 at 6:30: "Miroirs de Tunis" (1994, Raoul Ruiz; no English subtitles; Tunisia and France) and "Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask" (1996, Isaac Julien; Martinique, Algeria, and the United Kingdom)....March 14 at 9: "Le Bouillon d'Awara" (1995, Paes; French Guyana)....March 15 at 2 and March 18 at 8:30: "La Promesse" (1996, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne; Belgium)....March 15 at 4 and March 18 at 6:30: "Il Était une Fois Beyrouth" (1995, Saab; Lebanon)....March 15 at 6:15: "Gito l'Ingrat" (1993, Léonce Ngabo; Burundi)....March 15 at 8:15: "L'Homme sur les Quais" (1993, Raoul Peck; Haiti, France, and Canada)....March 16 at 6:30: "It Can't Be Winter, We Haven't Had Summer Yet" (1980, Louise Carré; Quebec)....March 16 at 8:45: "Mon Coeur Est Témoin" (1996, Carré; Quebec and Tunisia)....March 17 at 12:30 and 6:30: "L'Œuvre au Noir" (1988, André Delvaux, France)....March 17 at 3:15 and 9: "Joyeux Calvaire" (1996, Denys Arcand; France).

Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.—Through March 12: The 14th Annual Israel Film Festival. (For information about show times, call 755-3020.)

Aaron Davis Hall, W. 135th St. at Convent Ave. (650-7148)—March 13 at 7 and March 14 at noon, 3, and 6: Four programs of short films made by black independent filmmakers.

Paris, 4 W. 58th St.—Through March 12, fourteen films produced and/or directed by Ismail Merchant and James Ivory are being shown. (For information about show times, call 688-3800.)

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A series of films that have won or been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. March 17 at 7: "La Strada" (1954, Federico Fellini; in Italian)....March 17 at 9: "Tristana" (1970, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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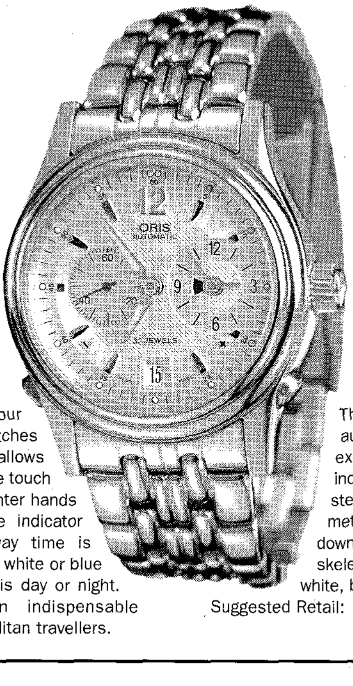
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



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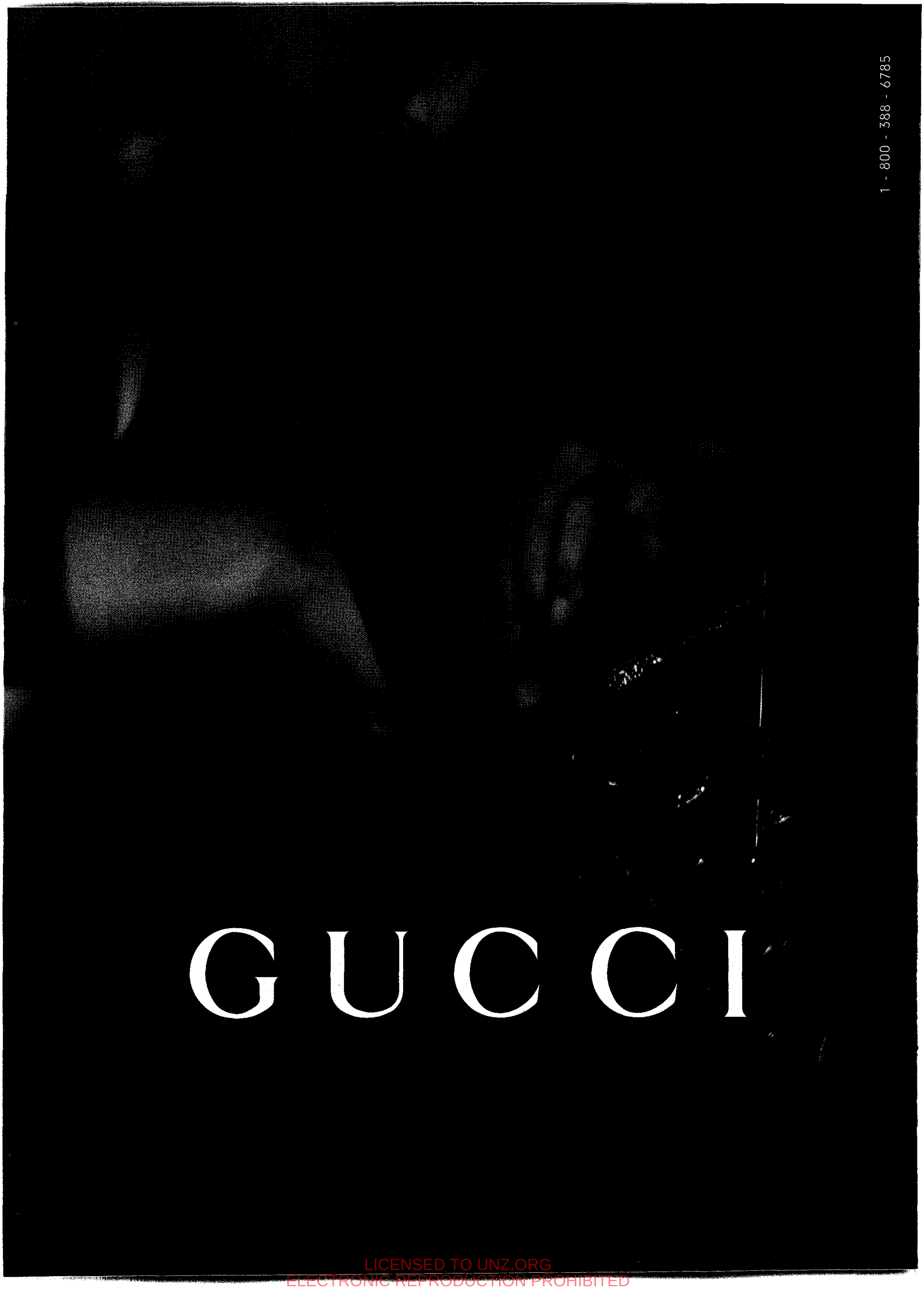
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

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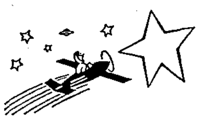
A celebrity stampede as "Time" magazine turns seventy-five.



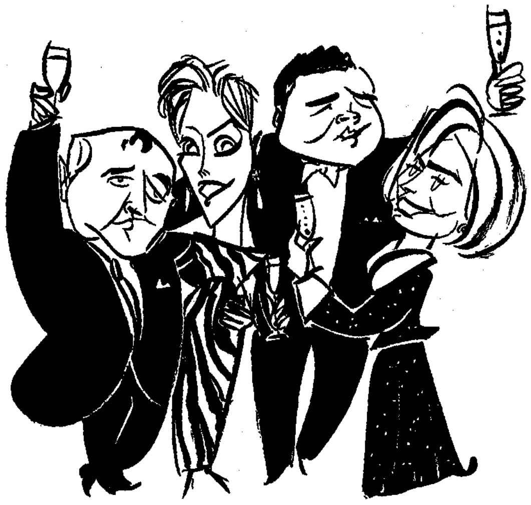
ON the morning of *Time's* seventy-fifth-anniversary gala at Radio City Music Hall last week, astronomers from the University of California at Berkeley announced in the pages of the *Times* that the universe is expanding at an ever-accelerating rate. It is a phenomenon that leads the scientists to suppose that there is in the cosmos a prevailing "repulsive force," the opposite of gravity, which drives all things eternally outward. Fine news for real-estate agents. The bracing discovery was also useful to ponder that night at Radio City as one star after another hurtled from limousine to lobby with alarming outward velocity. Celebrities, celebrities everywhere. It seems there will be room for all of them.

The stars came with such speed, with so many lights flashing, that one barely had time to mark all the faces: Joe DiMaggio, Bill Gates, Dick Morris, Dr. Jack Kevorkian, Barry Diller, Mary Tyler Moore, Muhammad Ali, Tom Cruise, Walter Cronkite, Norman Mailer, and, of course, William Ginsburg. Dozens and dozens of celebs. After a while, everyone in the room, no matter how distinguished, no matter how infamous or lovable or loathsome, was the same. One form of light blurred into another, so that Kofi Annan became Matt Lauer who became Molly Ringwald who became Billy Graham. Equality in celebrityhood. In other words, everyone was Sylvia Miles.

As it does now just about everywhere, the trivial got raised to the level of the significant, and vice versa. It was a party that paid tribute to the bizarre texture of public life as much as it did to the longevity of a news magazine. The statesman's presence flattered the intellectual vanity of the movie star and the movie star's presence flattered the glamour hunger of the statesman. It was a strange realm, in which the weapons inspector Richard Butler broke off a hallway exegesis on the UNSCOM operations in Iraq to chase down the star of "Goldfinger," a realm in which Toni Morrison's eloquent tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., eventually led to film clips of "I Love Lucy." Paul Volcker seemed sombre all night, until Sharon Stone rose in her zebra-striped gown to pay homage to Betty Friedan.

Where to look first? Where to hide? There was Raquel Welch, bodice a-poppin', giving an interview to a television reporter in which the solemn words "Henry Luce" and "the American century" could be heard above the cosmic whir. There was Mikhail Gorbachev, seated next to Sophia Loren. Even in retirement, Gorbachev's Party discipline is such that he did not permit himself the sort of leers that Leonid Brezhnev once cast upon the form of Jill St. John.

"Hey, Gorbachev!" one of the guests shouted at the non-English-speaking liberator. "Thanks for ending the Cold War!"



Gorbachev, Stone, Ali, and the First Lady

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

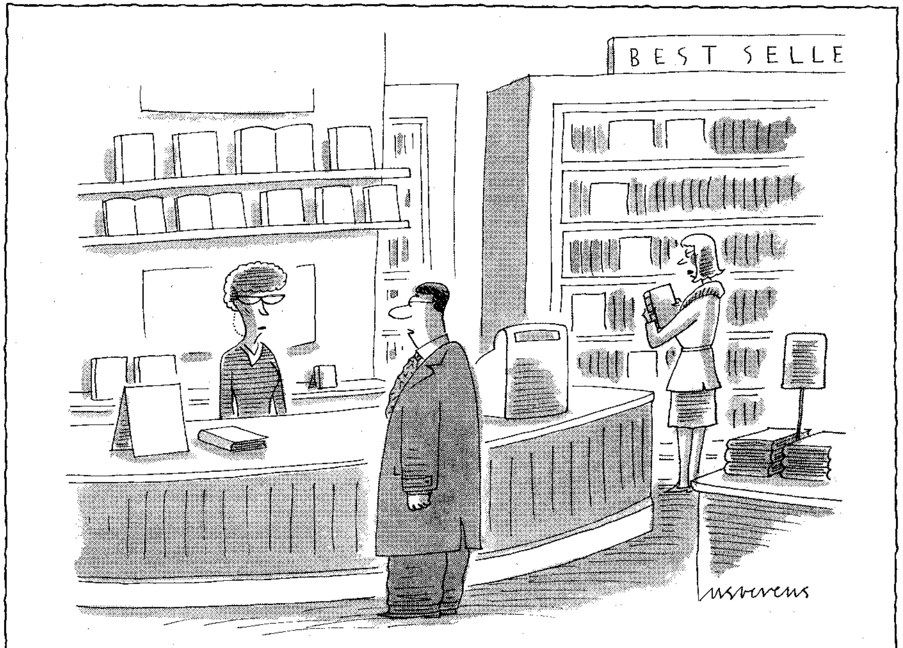
There was Claudia Schiffer (the New Germany) careering like a Valkyrie over to greet Hitler's erstwhile propagandist Leni Riefenstahl (the Old Germany). "And Dr. Kevorkian was looking over at Riefenstahl greedily, licking his chops," said Jason Epstein, the Random House editor. "She's ninety-five, and I guess the doctor figures she's got to be ready for an appointment." Riefenstahl, who, like many others, was at Radio City in her role as a *Time* cover subject, informed her tablemates that she would soon be flying to New Guinea for a session of scuba diving. She looked more fit than Dr. Death might have preferred. There is no God.

The editors of *Time* devised the finest seating arrangements since the Last Supper. Mountainous Bert Lance next to minuscule Kerri Strug. Dan Rather next to Patricia Nixon Cox. Kofi Annan next to Mira Sorvino. Mel Brooks next to Henry Kissinger and Henry Grunwald (triplets, separated at birth).

A lucky publisher named Sarah Crichton was flanked at her table by Louis Farrakhan and Sir David ("Call me Sir David") Frost. "When they started reading the roll call of *Time* cover subjects, the reaction was fascinating," Crichton said. "They'd say, 'Billy Graham!' and Farrakhan would applaud and say, 'Great man!' and Sir David would say, 'I interviewed him.' Then they'd say, 'Muhammad Ali!' and Farrakhan would applaud and say, 'Great man!' and Sir David would say, 'I interviewed him.' "

So unreal was the evening that one began to suspect that the ghost of Clare Boothe Luce had wafted through to spike the wine with LSD. John F. Kennedy, Jr., got up and toasted one of the worst public servants in a generation, Robert McNamara, for bravely taking responsibility for his errors in Vietnam a scant thirty years after the fact. What was next? Saddam Hussein singing "Mame"? It was not to be. Saddam, like his fellow cover subject O. J. Simpson, had been deemed "unlikely to attend" by the editors of *Time* and was not invited.

—David Remnick



"Do you have anything positive on the Kennedys?"

BE PREPARED

With the Boy Scouts going gay, they'll need a few more badges.

Last week, a New Jersey court ruled that the Boy Scouts cannot oust an Eagle Scout just because he's gay. The Scouts had dismissed James Dale in 1990, both as a Scout and an assistant Scoutmaster, because he was an "avowed homosexual," and had thereby violated Scout bylaws, which demand that boys remain "morally straight" and "clean." Gay men were once stereotyped as being excessively prissy, and now they're suddenly piglets. Haven't the Scouting authorities ever seen the Calvin Klein flagship store on Madison?

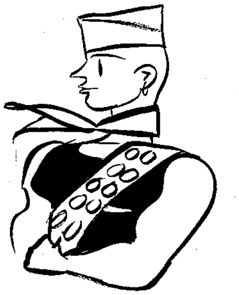
Earlier this year, a lesbian informant went to see "In and Out," a gay-themed movie I wrote. She sat behind a row of Girl Scouts, who told her that they were at the Cineplex to earn merit badges in Tolerance. Some other possible gay-sensitive merit badges:

1. Modelling: This badge has already been earned by all the barely pubescent Scouts whom Bruce Weber photographed for a recent article in *Vanity Fair*, frolicking, often shirtless, and bathing at a national jamboree. Mr. Weber, in this pioneering portfolio, has added the following virtues to the Scout Oath: along with "brave" and "reverent," we can now include "lithe," "ruddy," and "scrumptious."

2. Eliminating Color: This would be a classic écru badge, edged in slate, that would salute the Scout's exquisite use of neutrals such as blanched parchment, empty sand, and Chernobyl ash. And, as good Scouts know, Brownies are the new black.

3. Gucci Awareness: This badge, designed by Tom Ford, would be a simple circular cutout in the standard Scout shirt, revealing the Scout's left nipple. Qualified Scouts would be asked to memorize the Modernism pledge: "It's not about fashion, it's about creating a system in which Gwyneth can happen."

4. Dish: This badge, featuring the E! Entertainment Television logo, would be awarded to the first Scout in any troop to claim that his best friend's roommate in L.A. knew a waiter who'd had sex with a trainer who'd received a hot glance from Tom Cruise, even though Tom was on a videocassette of "Mission: Impossible" at the time. The Dish badge requires that all rumors be not merely one hundred per cent false but invoked as a form of moral superiority: "Oh, please, everyone knows that Ken Starr is a *big girl*."



5. First Novels or Indie Films: Scouts can wear this badge only if their maiden manuscripts or screenplays combine parental abuse, vomiting during sex, old David Bowie lyrics, and canoeing. The badge will bear the Scout's grainy photograph, in which he will wear sunglasses and a wool ski hat and have his arm around Chloe Sevigney.

6. Lesbian Outreach: An item in last week's Science section of the *Times* reports that the inner ears of gay women "work more like those of men" and have "less sensitive cochlea amplifiers" than those of heterosexual women. This revelation explains the lesbian penchant for pixie haircuts and Babar books. Boy Scouts can earn this badge of compassion by respectfully yelling at lesbians.

7. Social Justice: This badge would be awarded to any Scout willing to legally marry Andrew Sullivan. Afterward, the happy couple would pitch a pup tent, roast marshmallows, and use a burnt twig to accent their eyes. —Paul Rudnick

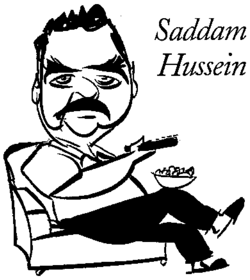
THE PICTURES

A new plan to take out Saddam Hussein, courtesy of Hollywood.

Saddam Hussein may have brought us back from the brink of war by deciding to allow United Nations weapons inspectors access to his contested presidential sites, but there are other violations that the Iraqi premier has yet to rectify. That screening on Iraqi television of a bootleg copy of the movie "Wag the Dog," for a start: a few weeks ago, the Iraqi public was treated to a grainy version of Barry Levinson's film, presumably to illustrate that it is in the nature of an American President caught in a sex scandal to decide that a war overseas is exactly the kind of distraction his country needs. Which raises the following question: If we're not going to go to war with Iraq, could Saddam nonetheless be nabbed on copyright law, just as Al Capone was caught on tax evasion?

"This whole piracy situation is serious, because it represents a violation of property," Levinson said by telephone from

Hollywood, though he added that he would probably not be pressuring New Line Cinema to take action against Saddam. There are two routes to punishing copyright violations: by using the internal laws of the country in question and by applying outside sanctions. "The individual country has to have a stern copyright law, and the resolve to enforce the law," Jack Valenti, the president of the Motion Picture Association of America, explained. Valenti's antipiracy teams travel worldwide to lobby for strong laws, though they have not ventured to Iraq (too few theatres and too much danger). Valenti said that the antipiracy regulations in the United States are now very tough, with jail terms available for transgressors.



Saddam Hussein

Iraq isn't a member of the World Trade Organization, whose members have agreed to abide by rules that protect intellectual-property rights, so there can't be any punishment under W.T.O. regulations. The American government could apply pressure, but sanctions would have little effect, since we already have a comprehensive trade embargo against Iraq. Besides, the government there would be unlikely to take action against the television station that it in fact runs. "They know they have stolen property," Valenti said, "and the fact is they don't give a damn. Just like Clark Gable." So maybe there's nothing that can be done about the bootlegged "Wag"? "It looks like the only measure left," a U.N. diplomat told me wryly, "is a military strike."

—REBECCA MEAD

DEPT. OF IMMORTALITY

If politicians don't pat each other on the back, who will?

WASHINGTON

THE politicians in Congress and the White House, with characteristic modesty, have just honored one of their own by renaming Washington's National Airport. That the politico newly immortalized in real estate is Ronald Reagan is of no particular consequence. It could just as easily have been Harry Truman, Warren Harding, or William Jennings Bryan. Perhaps one day Jim Guy Tucker and Fife Symington, two governors who have recently fallen under a cloud, will be thus elevated.

What is striking is that it seems never to have occurred to our elected representatives that there may be Americans outside the political arena who deserve a tip of the hat. How about those who have brought us great pleasure, like George Gershwin or Humphrey Bogart? Or who have enriched our lives by their imagination, like Eugene O'Neill, William Faulkner, Martha Graham, Cole Porter, or Mark Rothko?

One of Rome's international airports is called Leonardo da Vinci. But here nobody seems to find it peculiar that Washington's bears the name of John Foster Dulles, a dyspeptic Wall Street lawyer who, as Ike's secretary of state, is remembered for making the Cold War even more dangerous than it already was.

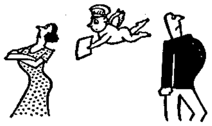
But if politicians didn't name airports after themselves, who would? And if they waited a while to do so, who would remember them? The U.S. Postal Service has a useful rule: no one gets put on a commemorative stamp until he or she has been dead at least ten years (except Presidents, who just have to be dead). Not many politicians would risk that judgment of history. So they rush in with the chisels while the honoree is still alive.

Occasionally, there is a brave act of self-denial. In Orange County, California, the legislators honored the culture instead of themselves. They named their airport after—who else?—John Wayne.

—RONALD STEEL

POESY DEPARTMENT

For better and for worse, it's the Ted and Sylvia show.



IT'S rare for poets to get any attention in the popular culture, never mind their getting enough attention to start worrying about whether it is the right kind of attention. So it was most peculiar to hear the poet and critic A. Alvarez complaining, as he did at a recent Academy of American Poets symposium, that people were buying Ted Hughes's new collection, "Birthday Letters," which is about Hughes's marriage to Sylvia Plath and has been on the *Times'* best-seller list for the past three weeks, "for all the wrong reasons. It's the Oprah Winfrey element," Alvarez said disdainfully.

On that Thursday evening, in Cooper Union's Great Hall, Alvarez's fellow-panelists—poets and Plath scholars—made a high-minded effort to fend off the Oprah element. "Is it all right if I call the 'you' in the poem Plath and the 'I' Hughes?" the poet and critic Alicia Ostriker asked at the outset of the discussion. (It was perfectly all right: by the end of the event, everyone was calling them Ted and Sylvia.) Though Ostriker and her colleagues discussed Hughes's allusions to Donne and Eliot, the temptation to read the poems for the dirty bits—the cheek-bite courtship; the Other Woman; Daddy—was irresistible. Alvarez told a story of Hughes's being asked, a year after Plath's death, how he was: "He said, 'How do you think I am? How would you feel if you knew you had helped kill a genius?' " Fran McCullough, who edited Plath's journals, revealed that in 1976 Hughes had told her that "this Sylvia business was beginning to get to him. He thought the passive role was finally self-destructive." Alvarez elicited talk-show-style audience participation when he announced that Plath "got the easy out" with her suicide (loud hissing), as did the critic Bonnie Costello, who wondered aloud what Plath would have made of the symposium, and read a bitter line from Plath's poem "Lady Lazarus": "Do not think I underestimate your great concern." (That drew a loud whoop from one audience member.)

But the real daytime-TV moment came when the panelists retired to Café Loup for dinner, and Fran McCullough, who had earlier told the audience about Hughes and Plath's interest in tarot, mentioned that she had been to have her own cards read the previous week. "I asked the card reader, 'How's Sylvia?' " McCullough recounted. "And she told me, 'She's very angry. It's keeping her from getting to the light. She's *very* angry.' "

—REBECCA MEAD

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

SORE WINNER

Hollywood has embraced "Titanic," but the jury's still out on James Cameron.

BY KURT ANDERSEN

SCHADENFREUDE is a nasty, ineradicable bit of human nature, present everywhere and always. But it is especially virulent in Hollywood, and it's a little uglier there because of the smiley-face hypocrisy of the place: nowhere else, probably not even in Washington, do people revelling in another person's flameout make such a show of earnest empathy while privately aching intensely for successful colleagues to fail. Since there has never been a movie as successful as James Cameron's "Titanic"—rapturous praise from tough critics, staggering commercial success everywhere on the planet, more Oscar nominations than any other film in a half century—Hollywood's collective anti-Cameron schadenfreude should be achieving critical mass just about now.

Might there be a sufficient "Titanic" backlash to keep it from winning the Best Picture Oscar? (The ballots were mailed out last Tuesday.) One factor suppressing ill-will toward the movie is the inoculation of bad press it received while it was still in production. Because of the barrage of negative stories (about the two-hundred-million-dollar budget, the bullying by Cameron of his actors and crew, the five-month delay, the mutual loathing between the co-producing studio executives at Fox and Paramount), "Titanic" underwent its obligatory failure stage (in the three-stage modern marketing-phenom cycle: success, failure, redemption) before it ever opened. The good reviews and the glorious box-office performance were therefore perceived by the media and the Hollywood establishment not as ordinary success, which would beg for a reversal, but as a comeback. This is what the longtime studio executive and Academy vice-president Sid Ganis means when he refers, with fond awe, to "the kind of cocoon around 'Titanic' that's protecting it from backlash."

The movie's extravagant commercial success protects it, too. Among the five Best Picture nominees in any given year, the movie that wins tends to be the biggest-grossing or second-biggest-grossing one. Among the movie business's movers and shakers, to criticize a movie so big, so Hollywood, so popular is an act of churlish industry disloyalty. "Titanic" 's interests and Hollywood's interests have come to be seen as not just intertwined but identical. A couple of weeks ago at a dinner in Hollywood, I asked Arnold Rifkin, the head of the William Morris Agency, if he detected any groundswell of anti-"Titanic" sentiment. His agency represents Gus Van Sant, the Oscar-nominated director of "Good Will Hunting," but also Kate Winslet, the Oscar-nominated star of "Titanic." Rifkin looked at me as if I had squawked in a foreign language. "No," he said carefully. "No." "Yes," his wife demurred.

JACK ZIEGLER

In other words, yes, there is some "Titanic" dissent, variously a function of envy, rivalry, and disapproving aesthetic bafflement, but almost no one in the movie business will admit to any antipathy on the record. (Three different people who told me ungenerous things in interviews about Cameron and his movie later asked that their quotes be softened.) "I know Jim, and he's a genius of sorts," one of the town's important movie agents told me. "It's not very chic to say 'Titanic' is unwatchable. I'm in a minority. I thought the movie was terrible. The level of writing is just atrocious." Then he added, "I do think it's good for the movie business." This regard for "Titanic" is reminiscent of Ronald Reagan's giddy popularity in the mid-eighties, when Reaganism was tantamount to patriotism, and even people who considered the President shallow or stupid had to admit that there was something awesome and even sublime about his craft and his popularity.

Despite Hollywood's compulsory boosterism on behalf of "Titanic," Cameron may be hurt by his own sore-winner outbursts. He has been showing up at industry events lately—an uncharacteristic attempt to play the establishment game, according to a friend of his—but has reportedly acted like a prima donna. When Cameron won the Golden Globe, in January, he snarled, in a kind of ungracious Howard Stern taunt, "Does this prove once and for all that size does matter?"

Harvey Weinstein, the in-your-face co-chairman of Miramax Films, saw Cameron's bigger-is-better triumphalism as a gauntlet thrown, since Miramax's raison d'être is small movies. (Miramax once owned the television rights to a play I wrote.) The studio's "Good Will Hunting," up for nine Oscars, including Best Picture, cost less than a tenth as much as "Titanic." "Cameron walks around and says, 'Size matters,' " Weinstein says. "This is David and Goliath. We're Miramax!" Trying to be polite, he says, " 'Titanic' is a spectacular entertainment," then goes on, "but I just don't think it's the best picture of the year. Some of the dialogue makes you cringe." ("Well," he adds with a chuckle, "there goes Miramax ever working with Jim Cameron.")

Apart from the acting categories, the only available Oscar nomination "Titanic" didn't get was for its screenplay, which, another anti-"Titanic" studio executive told me hopefully, shows that it may be "vulnerable" in the Best Picture category. This year, however, Miramax can't telephone Academy voters, a form of politicking it pioneered a couple of years ago. "There was no rule against it," Weinstein says, "so I would make some key phone calls. I called Tom Cruise.... The minute I started, it's 'He's brainwashing people!' You can't do that anymore."

The last film to get fourteen Oscar nominations was "All About Eve," which came out in 1950, and had precisely the kind of smart, talky, witty script that "Titanic" antagonists regard as a gold standard. But this is a post-literate cinematic age, an age in which movie audiences, as in the silent era, can be fully satisfied by fresh, well-executed special effects and heroic myth—by a kind of grand cinematic Reaganism which is finally immune to critical carping. Most people, even smart people, swept away by the "Titanic" spectacle, don't care that the actors utter dumb lines. (Moreover, Cameron has advanced the art of the modern thrill-ride event movie: "Titanic" is a fabulous sinking-ship simulation *and* a Tunnel of Love.) Just as Weinstein is an old-fashioned Hollywood throwback, running Miramax on a kind of passionate seat-of-the-pants instinct and making movies inexpensively, he is judging "Titanic" by old-fashioned, pre-Spielberg literary standards. Most of the Best Picture nominees—"Good Will Hunting," "L. A. Confidential," "As Good As It Gets"—are good movies made from impeccable scripts; "Titanic" embodies a different paradigm, the good, arguably great movie with a merely serviceable script.

Yet, for all the ostensible Hollywood-versus-independent-film rivalry, "Titanic" and "Good Will Hunting" are oddly similar. "They're both films that make the Academy feel good about filmmaking," says Gus Van Sant (whose druggy and homoerotic previous films are to "Good Will Hunting" as "Good Will Hunting" is to "Titanic"). Both are weepy love stories between beautiful, talented working-class boys and zaftig, blossoming ruling-class girls. And, in fact, the two movies' leading pre-Oscar promoters, Cameron and Weinstein, are curiously similar, too—acerbic, righteous, sometimes maniacal visionaries who, despite immense Hollywood wealth and power, still consider themselves outsiders in the movie business. Which helps explain why they both are so desperate to win the Oscar. ♦

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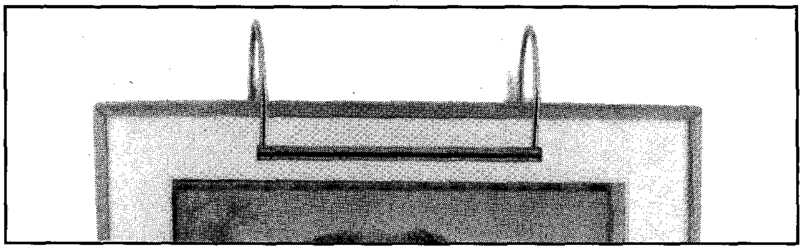

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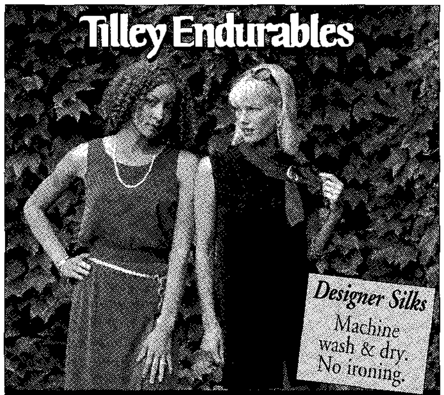

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LETTER FROM SILICON VALLEY

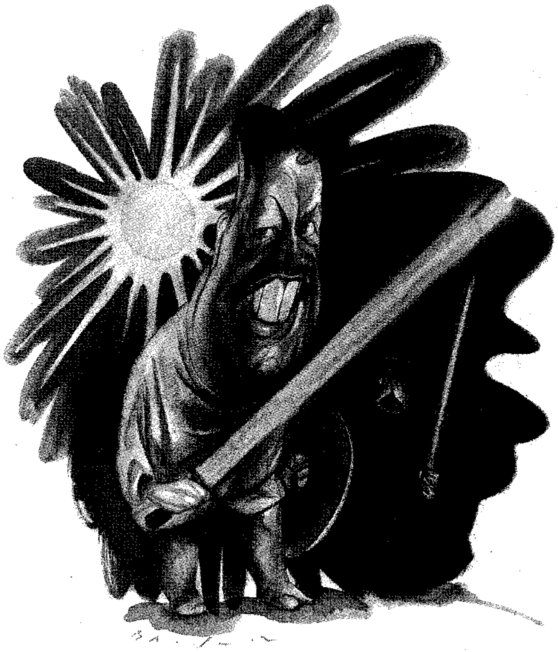
THE SUN KING

How Scott McNealy became the Anti-Gates.

BY JOHN HEILEMANN

WHEN Scott McNealy approached Bill Gates, just before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Microsoft last Tuesday, it seemed possible for a moment that the Senate's air of forced courtesy might get the best of them. Decked out like a pair of little kids on their way to a wedding—in suits and ties and decent leather shoes, their hair freshly cut and plastered down—they smiled broadly, shook hands, and exchanged pleasantries. Then McNealy, the C.E.O. of Sun Microsystems, took his seat next to Gates and proceeded to demonstrate why he is known as the Microsoft chairman's most relentless and extravagant critic. Speaking rapidly, he dubbed Gates "the most dangerous and powerful industrialist of our age." He accused Microsoft of using its monopoly in desktop-computer operating systems to engage in "illegal, predatory, and exclusionary business practices." And he argued that Gates's company was trying to control "the written and spoken language of the digital age," adding that "the only thing that I'd rather own than Windows is English, because then I could charge you two hundred and forty-nine dollars for the right to speak it, and I could charge you an upgrade fee when I add new letters."

McNealy has long been one of the industry's most respected executives, and as the Microsoft debate has escalated and turned political he has taken on a role as a kind of corporate statesman, albeit a caustic one. His constituency is Silicon Valley—or, more precisely, a loose federation of companies that strategize together and collaborate on new technologies, and that represent as serious a challenge to Gates's firm as any posed by the courts or the government: the shift in computing away from the P.C. and toward the Internet. At Microsoft, the Net-centric alliance is known as NOIS, after its four leading members—Netscape, Oracle, I.B.M., and Sun—but McNealy prefers a "Star Wars" nomenclature, with Microsoft cast as the villainous Empire and the Valley firms as the Rebel Forces.



McNealy leads an alliance of Silicon Valley companies that represent as great a challenge to Gates as any posed by the government.

STEVE BRODNER

McNealy's emergence as the anti-Microsoft faction's front man owes much to Java, an Internet-friendly computer language designed to be a sort of digital Esperanto, which can allow programmers to create software capable of running on any operating system. Since Sun unveiled Java, three years ago, McNealy has made it one of technology's best-known brands, a unifying force in a fractious Valley, and, together with the rise of the Internet itself, the most acute threat that Microsoft has yet faced. At the same time, without much public notice, he has adroitly worked the political process—apparently helping to bankroll stealthy lobbying efforts aimed at the Justice Department and other agencies, cajoling Congress to take Gates on, and speaking out in forums such as Ralph Nader's anti-Microsoft conference in Washington, D.C., where he delivered the keynote address last November.

McNealy claims that Microsoft's main goal is to destroy Sun. What he doesn't say is that, like many archrivalries in the business world, the one between him and Gates has about it a certain quality of symbiosis. Five years ago, McNealy was all but unheard-of outside Silicon Valley, and Sun was a profitable but fairly obscure niche player making workstations—high-powered desktop computers—for engineers. Today, he is one of the industry's budding celebrities, and Sun has been literally transformed, tripling in size, moving into the first rank of computer companies, and attaining an image that is preposterously sexy for a firm whose products are bought by corporations, not ordinary consumers. Several factors have been responsible for this transformation, but perhaps the most important has been McNealy's success in exploiting the Valley's endemic fear and loathing of Gates to rally support for Java and Sun—a coup suggesting that McNealy is, as much as anything, a masterly marketer.

"Scott sincerely believes that this battle with Microsoft is a battle for the future of information technology in the next century," I was told by Andy Bechtolsheim, who, along with McNealy, was one of Sun's co-founders and is now an executive at the networking giant Cisco Systems. "But Scott is very smart. He also knows it's good for business."

THE people who attract attention in Silicon Valley tend to fall into a few familiar categories: technical wizards with brilliant minds but meagre social skills; self-styled cyber-visionaries who communicate in a dialect only remotely related to English; and college-dropouts-turned-entrepreneurial-heroes, like Steve Jobs. McNealy fits into none of these categories. A graduate of Harvard and of Stanford business school whose primary pursuits at both places seem to have been golf, girls, and beer, he comes across, at first, as a superannuated fraternity president. He has a boyish face, the build of an aging jock (he plays hockey on five geezer-league teams), and, despite a net worth of more than four hundred million dollars, tastes that run to Budweiser and Burger King. When his wife, Susan, met him, in 1994, she was a senior at Stanford and he was on the campus for a wedding. Judging by his looks and demeanor, she assumed that he wasn't much older than she was. Actually, he was almost forty. (The McNealys have two sons: a two-year-old named Maverick, after the Tom Cruise character in "Top Gun," and a newborn, named Dakota.)

But what most sets McNealy apart from the techno élite is his passion for bent metal. In a business that has come to see software as precious and hardware as a commodity—that regards the production of tangible goods as passé—McNealy offers paeans to the factory floor. "You gotta *make* something," he is fond of saying. And, in a culture enamored of the view that what is being created in the Valley isn't just a new kind of industry but a whole new kind of economy, McNealy prefers to see the world through a more conventional prism. For years, he has compared the computer business to the automobile business, and has predicted that computing would eventually boil down to its own Big Three: Microsoft and Intel ("General and Motors," he says), I.B.M., and Sun. This is more than a clever analogy. It is the reason that, as the rest of the industry has coalesced around the "Wintel" dynasty—Windows software and Intel microprocessors—McNealy has insisted that Sun produce its own operating systems and chips. The difference between Sun and any of its Wintel rivals, such as Hewlett-Packard or Dell or Compaq, he says, is the difference between "a car manufacturer and a car dealer."

McNealy's traditional outlook and his interest in manufacturing are rooted in his upbringing—in Detroit, where his father was a senior auto-industry executive. At a time when the American Motors Corporation was on the brink of bankruptcy, Bill McNealy rose to become the company's vice-chairman, only to be deposed after several commercial failures, notably that of the A.M.C. Pacer. He was rarely at home, and his relationship with Scott was strained. Years later, when Bill and his wife divorced, Scott sided with his mother, Marm, whom he moved out to the Val-

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ley and set up in a house not far from his. Although he and his father have since reconciled (they occasionally play golf together), his mother is one of his closest confidants and advisers, accompanying him frequently to industry events and appearing at Sun's annual shareholders' meetings to cheer him on.

One afternoon, over a lunch of tuna melts and curly fries in the cafeteria on Sun's campus, in Palo Alto, I asked McNealy what he had learned from his father's career. "That I never wanted to be C.E.O. The executives I knew were my dad, Lee Iacocca, and Roger Smith. I knew what the sacrifice was—I'd seen it," he said, citing the hockey games, swim meets, and band recitals of his childhood which his father had been too busy to attend. "My whole life, I just wanted to be a chief operating officer, and then someday run my own little forty-person tool-and-die shop." Yet McNealy's ambition, his competitiveness, and his propensity for workaholism would all prove to be as severe as his father's had been. One of his best friends told me, "I don't know how Scott feels about this, but there's a lot of genetic continuity between him and his dad."

McNealy's ascent to the top of Sun was swift and unexpected. After finishing his M.B.A. at Stanford, he decided to stay in the Valley, working first at a factory making army tanks, then at a firm making workstations. In 1982, a friend of his from Stanford, Vinod Khosla, persuaded him that the two of them should start up a workstation company of their own—Sun. (The name stood for Stanford University Network.) Khosla, an Indian immigrant, who had grown up poor in New Delhi reading *Electronic Engineering Times*, would be Sun's C.E.O. Andy Bechtolsheim would design the hardware, a young Berkeley savant named Bill Joy would handle the software, and McNealy would run manufacturing. Two turbulent years later, however, Khosla left after a dispute with the board, and McNealy, then twenty-nine, was asked to take over as temporary C.E.O. "I didn't want to do it," he recalled. "So I asked my mom, and she said, 'What the hell? Give it a couple years.'"

Fourteen years later, McNealy is one of the longest-serving C.E.O.s in the Valley. Not that his tenure has been altogether smooth. Battles have raged between McNealy, his co-founders, and his senior staff. "Sun has always been marked by conflict," Bill Raduchel, who taught McNealy economics at Harvard and is now one of Sun's chief strategists, told me. "Scott is very emotional. He has strong beliefs, but he isn't willing to spend a lot of time justifying his positions. One of my staff members once asked me, 'Why does Scott always want us to feel bad?' He's always asking people to give a hundred and forty per cent." Raduchel added, "That's what Scott saw his dad do at A.M.C. The way that he manages is to overreach. He pushes and pushes, until someone pushes back."

I asked McNealy about this, and he smiled an unrepentant smile. "Harmony is a Japanese thing," he said. "It's not a word we use at Sun."

HARMONIOUS or not, Sun has been remarkably resilient. Profitable since its first year, it has staved off competition from far larger rivals, such as I.B.M. and D.E.C. Under the tutelage of Bill Joy, McNealy came to appreciate the importance of computer networking, and the possibilities of the Internet, long before most people in the industry did. For years, Sun's corporate slogan, "The network is the computer," drew puzzled reactions in the Valley, but when the Web boom ignited, the firm was poised to cash in. As a result, Sun is now a leading provider of networking software and "server" computers—the high-end, high-priced, back-office machines that run corporate networks—with sales approaching ten billion dollars. "In the early days, we went after the tiny little engineering-workstation market," McNealy said. "Now we're going after all of computing."

That Sun and Microsoft were bound to collide became clear to McNealy in the early nineties. As P.C.s grew more powerful, he knew, they would begin to be able to handle the tasks of workstations and, consequently, to eat into Sun's core market. At the same time, Gates was developing an industrial-strength operating system called Windows N.T., which would one day threaten Sun's lucrative server business. So McNealy began his campaign against Microsoft. He decried the P.C. as an unwieldy, feature-laden instrument—a "hairball"—that is too costly for corporations and too complicated for individuals. He cited studies showing that the average firm spends over six thousand dollars a year on service and support for each P.C. it owns. He told horror stories of people who use P.C.s at home struggling for days to get them up and running. But his polemics did nothing to stop Windows. "I said, 'Scott, give up,'" David Marquardt, a venture capitalist who financed both Sun and Microsoft in their infancies, and who now sits on the Microsoft board, told me. "It's like you're out there on this field that everyone else has deserted, waving your spear, looking for someone to poke."

What changed everything for McNealy was Java. When the language was introduced, in 1995, the initial excitement was over its ability to bring motion to static Web pages—to make animated figures dance and stock tickers flash. But Java's larger potential soon became clear. In the past, programs had always been written for particular machines and had resided on a computer's desktop. By enabling code-cutters to develop software that could run on any machine (to "write once, run anywhere," as Sun puts it), Java could allow programs to reside anyplace on the Web, flowing out across the wires and working equally well wherever they might land, thus rendering Windows irrelevant, if not obsolete. In a Java-fuelled future, the reign of the P.C. would be challenged by an array of inexpensive, bare-bones devices known in the trade as "thin clients," the most prominent of which is the network computer, or N.C.—a stripped-down machine that stores and accesses files and programs on a network rather than a hard drive. McNealy contends that there are millions of people who will never boot up a Windows machine but might be attracted to something simpler.

"When you say the word 'computer,' most people say, 'Oh, God, there goes the weekend,'" he told me one morning. We were sitting in his office, which is modest and spare, its only notable adornment being a hockey jersey autographed by the San Jose Sharks. He was scrolling through E-mail on his JavaStation, which is Sun's entry into the nascent N.C. market. "Computers shouldn't be

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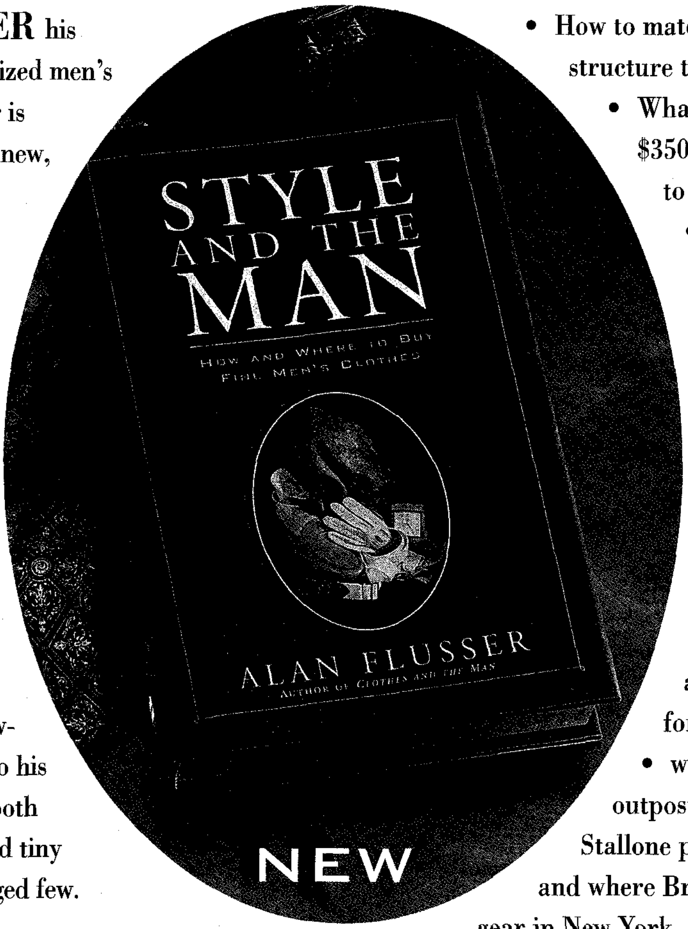
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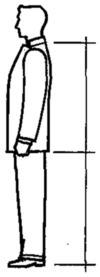

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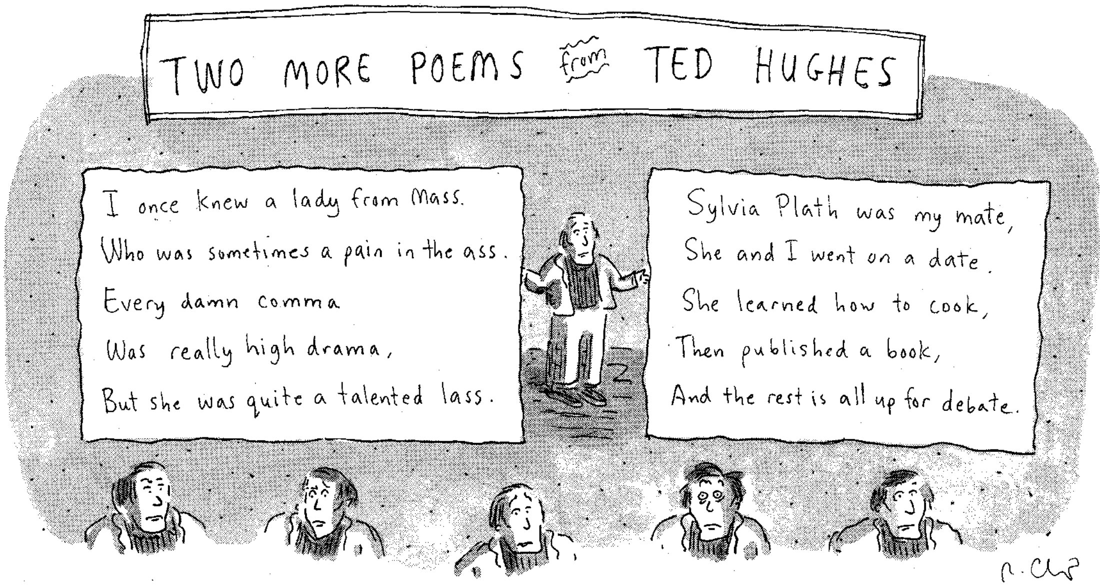

TWO MORE POEMS from TED HUGHES
I once knew a lady from Mass.
Who was sometimes a pain in the ass.
Every damn comma
Was really high drama,
But she was quite a talented lass.
Sylvia Plath was my mate,
She and I went on a date.
She learned how to cook,
Then published a book,
And the rest is all up for debate.
R. Chast

unusable," he went on. "You don't need to know how to work a telephone switch to make a phone call, or how to use the Hoover Dam to take a shower, or how to work a nuclear-power plant to turn on the lights. We think computing ought to be like a telephone or a water tap or a light switch."

It was this vision, shared and propounded by Larry Ellison, the C.E.O. of Oracle, and by Marc Andreessen, the Netscape software guru, that united the NOIS coalition following Java's launch. With startling speed, thousands of software developers began using the new language, and the possibility that a Java-inflected Web might weaken Microsoft's grip on the industry suffused the Valley with optimism. "The consensus was that Microsoft didn't get the Internet, that this was a green field—a chance to gain an enormous share of a huge new market," Eric Schmidt, who was then Sun's chief technology officer and is now the C.E.O. of the software company Novell, told me. But McNealy knew that if Java was going to be a universal language it would have to be spoken by Microsoft, too. Gates, for his part, was anxious to adopt Java as a way of catching up with the upstart browser company Netscape. In March of 1996, after months of haggling, Microsoft signed a deal to license Java from Sun.

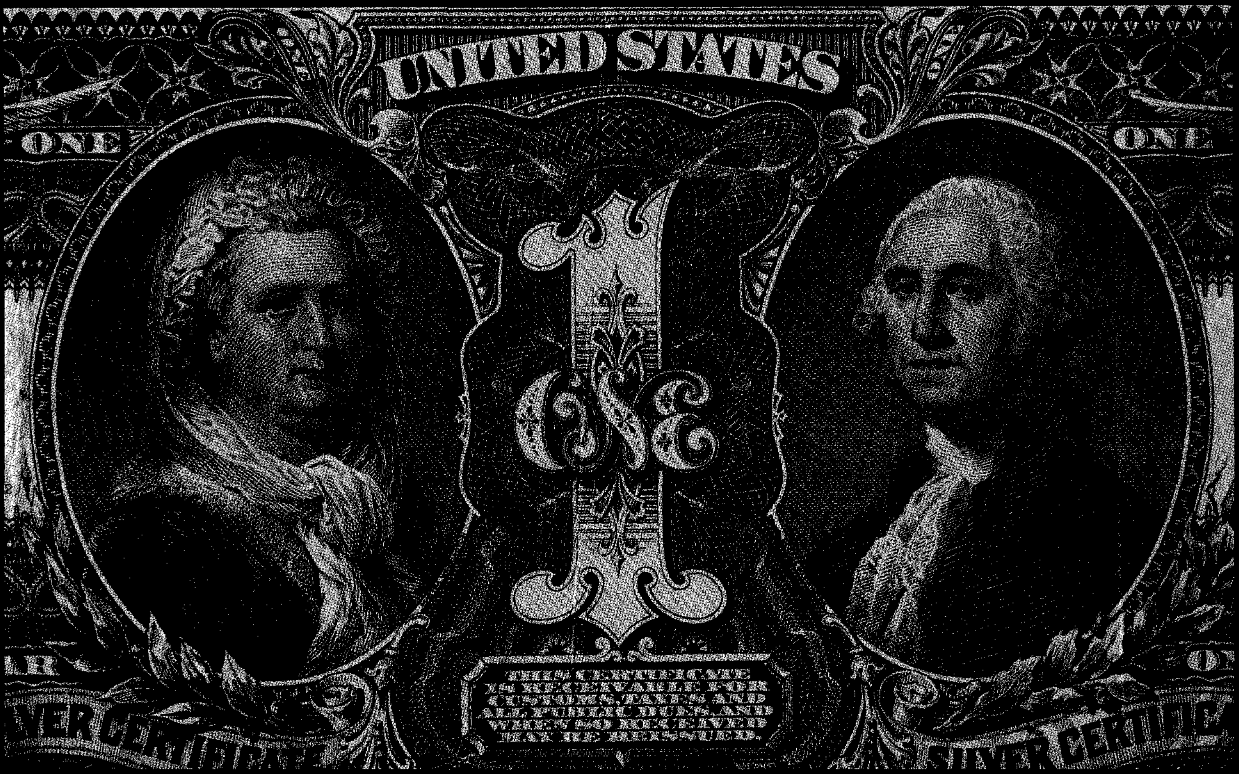
SINCE then, relations between the companies have been unremittingly hostile, with McNealy accusing Microsoft of violating its license by trying to undercut the language's write-once, run-anywhere promise. All along, Microsoft has dismissed Java as little more than "a moderately interesting programming language." But, at the same time that it has been battling Netscape, it has been devising ways for software developers to write Java programs that run especially well on Windows and which, Sun claims, may not run at all on other operating systems. As evidence that Microsoft signed its Java license in bad faith, McNealy cites internal Microsoft documents obtained in the Justice Department's antitrust investigation which indicate that at the time the deal was struck the stated strategy of senior Microsoft executives was to "get control of" and "neutralize" Java.

I recently ran this point by Steve Ballmer, who is Gates's second-in-command. Ballmer and McNealy have known each other for twenty-five years. They went to rival prep schools in the affluent Detroit suburbs, and Ballmer was a year behind McNealy both at Harvard and at Stanford. With a net worth of more than eight billion dollars, Ballmer is a great deal richer than McNealy, but in other ways the two are strikingly similar. If Gates is Microsoft's ego, Ballmer—beefy, boisterous, hypercompetitive—is its raging id. "Sun is just a very dumb company," he began, his voice rising quickly. "We didn't come in there saying, 'Hallelujah brother, we love you Sun, you're our boys!' Nobody was ever one tiny little bit confused that we and Sun had this sort of wonderful dovetailing of strategic interests! Those sub-fifty-I.Q. people at Sun who believe that are either uninformed, crazy, or sleeping." He went on, "It makes me mad at McNealy that he takes part in that kind of corporate character aspersion. Our goal in signing the contract was not to neutralize Java." But he added, "We are not 'write-once, run-anywhere' kind of guys."

Last October, Sun sued Microsoft for trademark infringement, false advertising, breach of contract, and unfair competition. (Microsoft countersued, also alleging breach of contract, among other charges.) In the anti-Microsoft milieu of the Valley, the prospect of seeing Gates's firm hauled into court generated a brief but palpable frisson. "In this industry, people are used to treating Microsoft somewhat like the Mafia," Marc Andreessen told me on the day the lawsuit was announced. "You don't say no to the Mafia, you don't challenge the Mafia, you generally don't fuck with the Mafia. In this culture, what Scott has done is remarkable." Then, two weeks later, the Justice Department made its move, reducing McNealy's remarkable lawsuit to background noise.

ON the way to the Nader conference last November, I asked McNealy what he thought the government should do about Microsoft. "Shut down some of the bullshit the government is spending money on and use it to buy all the Microsoft stock," he said. "Then put all their intellectual property in the public domain. Free Windows for everyone! If we did that, we could forget all this legal stuff and just bronze Gates, turn him into a statue, and stick him in front of the Commerce Department."

If Java and the Internet are the first front in McNealy's war on Microsoft, the political arena is the second. Like many high-tech C.E.O.s, McNealy fancies himself an adamant libertarian. (He supported Steve Forbes's Presidential candidacy in 1996, and he has few printable things to say about Silicon Valley's putative poster boy, Al Gore.) Yet McNealy's ideology has not stopped him from energetically lobbying govern-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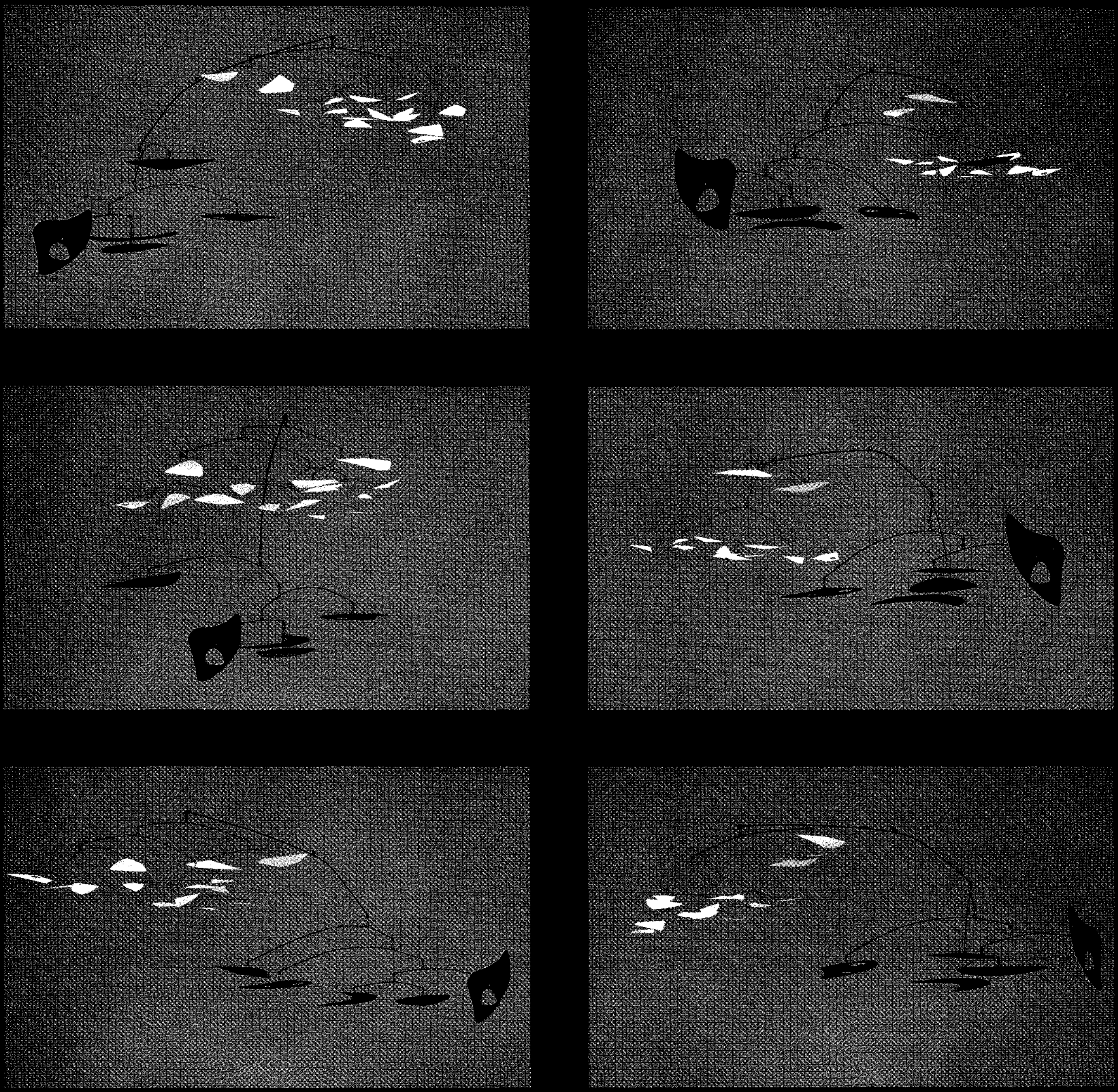

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ment officials to rein in Gates's firm. Last fall, McNealy swept through Washington like a visiting foreign dignitary, first giving his speech at the Nader summit, and then heading for Capitol Hill, where he had meetings with, among others, the Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott, and, not incidentally, the Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman, Orrin Hatch.

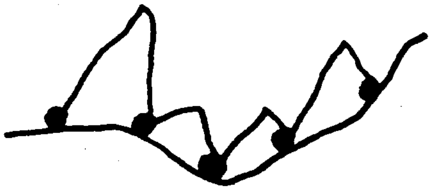
Not all of McNealy's efforts have been so public. For example, Sun is widely believed to be one of the main clients of Gary Reback, a Silicon Valley lawyer who agitates against Microsoft on behalf of a collection of firms that prefer to remain anonymous. Executives at two of those firms told me that in the past eighteen months Reback has submitted four confidential white papers to the Justice Department's antitrust division laying out the case against Gates's company—papers whose contents are echoed in the arguments that the government has so far put forward. Reback has also been meeting with a group of eleven state attorneys general who are considering taking action in concert against Microsoft.

It is too soon to say how effective all this lobbying will be. One thing that is clear, though, is that Microsoft's political situation is growing more nettlesome, not less. In addition to the relatively narrow suit that the Justice Department is now pursuing in a federal court, there are strong indications that the Department is preparing a broader antitrust action. And, to judge from Tuesday's Judiciary Committee hearing, Microsoft can anticipate further congressional headaches. Senator Hatch (who, because of the identity of one of his state's largest employers, is sometimes referred to in the industry as the Republican Senator from Novell) displayed an attitude of barely concealed hostility toward Gates, and, although Hatch's colleagues may be somewhat cloudy about the meaning of such concepts as thin clients, they do know a ripe target when they see one.

Meanwhile, Microsoft must also contend with the commercial challenge posed by McNealy and his allies. In recent months, the wilder hopes about Java have been muted by the problems that plague any young technology: many Java programs are slow; few compelling applications have been created so far; and developers are complaining that "write once, run anywhere" has proved to be easier said than done. Yet the NOIS coalition fortifies Java in powerful ways: I.B.M. alone has twenty-four hundred people working with Java (more than Sun has); I.B.M.'s software subsidiary Lotus is planning to introduce a Java-based suite of office software to run on N.C.s; and Novell recently established a fifty-million-dollar fund to speed the development of Java applications. Beyond NOIS, a grassroots Java movement of more than half a million programmers has arisen, and Java has become the primary programming language being taught in university computer-science departments around the world.

The likelihood that Java will shatter Windows, ending Microsoft's monopoly in desktop operating systems, is small. The real threat to Gates's firm lies in what Java represents. McNealy's success in rallying much of the Valley around the language is a sign of the sheer intensity of the industry's desire for an alternative to Microsoft. And it is also a symptom of the broader upheaval that the computer industry is undergoing as its center of gravity shifts from the P.C. to the Internet—or, as McNealy says, "Sun is not in charge; the Web is in charge." All along, Silicon Valley has been ahead of Microsoft in seeing the rise of the Net and in grasping its significance. Of course, Gates has shown over and over that Microsoft playing catchup is more formidable than most companies playing with a head start. Yet there is every chance that Microsoft will have a less dominant role in the coming era than it has in the present one.

MIGHT something similar be said of Sun? Given the current upheaval in the high-tech industry, no firm is safe—as Intel's stock-market drubbing indicated last week. McNealy's company is facing a number of particular dangers and uncertainties, from the Windows juggernaut to the recent mega-merger between Compaq and D.E.C. Once, as McNealy was telling me about the moments in Sun's history when its position was at its most precarious, he suddenly stopped and then said, "Now is one of those times."



There are those in the Valley, however, who believe that it is McNealy himself who is endangering Sun's position most. His critics accuse him of hubris—of "sucking his own exhaust," to employ a favorite Valleyism. More than one of his closest advisers told me that they had counselled him to tone down his anti-Microsoft rhetoric, because some of Sun's biggest customers, who also do business with Microsoft, found it to be counterproductive. Not surprisingly, Microsoft's executives compare McNealy to the many high-tech C.E.O.s who became so obsessed with defeating Gates that they began to neglect their customers—a move that turned them from Microsoft predators into Microsoft prey. "Scott is monomaniacal about us," Steve Ballmer said. "He's two standard deviations away from reality in what he says, and it's going to boomerang on him."

For years, industry observers have predicted that McNealy was about to stumble, but instead both he and Sun have only grown stronger. Today, it is McNealy, as much as anyone, who is setting the agenda in computing and forcing even Gates to follow. Sun's C.E.O. is not laboring under the illusion that he has a chance of toppling Microsoft any time soon. ("Scott is belligerently persistent," Bill Joy told me, "but he's not stupid.") Yet McNealy is aware that loudly proclaiming oneself a Gates slayer is a reliable way, as he says, to "cut through the clutter" and be competitive in the press with a firm that has become as pervasive a life-style brand as Nike or Disney or Coca-Cola.

It is also a way of annoying people at Microsoft, and this offers its own rewards. When I asked McNealy how he feels about accusations from the Gates camp that he is on a religious crusade, he assumed an air of infinite satisfaction. "It tells me that I'm getting through," he said. "In a hockey game, you try to get under the skins of their best players, to try and get them off their game. That's why, if you get booed in an opposing arena, it doesn't bother you—it charges you up. When Steve Ballmer says I'm wacko, I consider that a compliment." ♦

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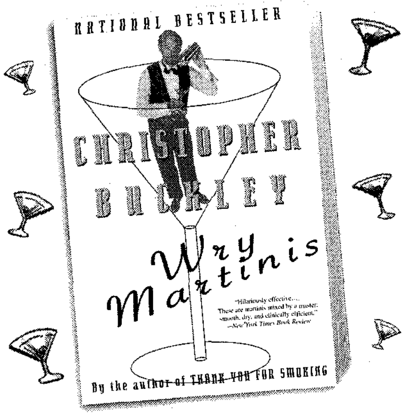

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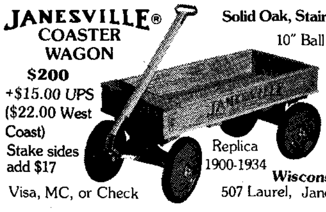

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THE NEW GANDHI

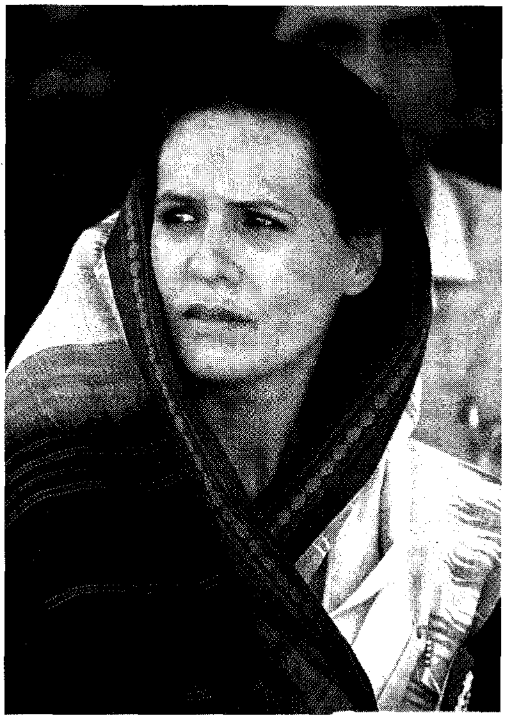
Can she save the family dynasty?

BY PATRICK FRENCH

HALF the people in the world who live in a democracy live in India. Yet India's recent general election was like nothing else on earth. For a start, there were more than six hundred million registered voters, and ballot boxes had to be transported by donkey, fishing boat, and mountain porter. There were nearly five thousand candidates, and some of these were unlikely parliamentarians. In the state of Uttar Pradesh, the "bandit queen" Phoolan Devi stood for parliament despite having sixty-three court cases pending against her. In nearby Bihar, a candidate named Ravindra Kushwaha chose to file his nomination papers under the alias Santraj Singh, since he was absconding from the police in a murder case.

The level of anarchic violence was terrifying. In the southern industrial city of Coimbatore, seventeen bombs were detonated in mid-February, killing sixty-two people, but nobody has claimed responsibility. Polling day in Bihar was, as usual, savage. There was widespread "booth capturing," an action in which a gang of armed men arrive at a polling station, shoot the police guard, stuff the ballot boxes with voting papers stamped in favor of their own party, and deliver the boxes to the local returning officer. After the first day of voting, the *Hindustan Times* chose this front-page headline: "AT LEAST 40 KILLED IN BIHAR POLL VIOLENCE—POLICE PATROL PARTY BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS."

This was only India's twelfth election since independence, in 1947, but its fourth in less than a decade—a sign of the fragmented state of the current polity. When India was under British rule, the degree of direct control exercised by New Delhi was limited. In the decades succeeding independence, Jawaharlal Nehru welded together a disparate nation, aided by the inherited "steel frame" of the civil service. The Congress Party, led by Nehru, offered secular, centralized, one-party government within a democratic structure. It was a substantial feat in a country with more than a thousand different languages and entrenched religious and caste divisions, and one that was unlikely to endure with ease. Even during those early decades, there were innumerable groupings within Congress, ranging from left-wing elements to a powerful hub of right-wing Hindu nationalists. Today, these splinter groups no longer huddle under the Party's umbrella. Many have split off, and, during the past ten years in particular, India has snowballed from a one-party democracy to a chaotic multiparty one.



Sonia Gandhi's friends have been bound by a code of silence that would make the Mafia blink.

BALDEV/SYGMA

When India's minority-coalition United Front government fell apart, last November, after the withdrawal of Congress support, there was every indication that the Hindu-triumphalist Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.)—the largest party in the elected house of the parliament, known as the Lok Sabha—would gallop home in the general election, winning enough new seats to form a majority government. The B.J.P. had long been on the periphery of Indian politics, but it was not until the nineteen-eighties that it moved to the heart, gathering votes in Rajasthan and Gujarat, in the west, and in the "cow belt," in the north, from disillusioned Hindus who felt that they were part of an oppressed, silent majority. Promising to limit foreign investment, build nuclear bombs, and put an end to the supposedly preferential treatment of Muslims under India's civil code, the B.J.P. tapped into a stream of latent Hindu chauvinism which had been brewing for decades. In the election campaign, however, the B.J.P. projected itself as modern and efficient—the Party of the future, which would restore India's national pride.

Congress, by contrast, was viewed as a celebrated movement of national liberation which, half a century after independence, was possibly set to lose most of its seats. Voters were bored by it—by its endless corruption scandals, by its cronyism, by its stunningly incompetent leader, Sitaram Kesri, and, most of all, by its destructive on again, off again external support for the United Front government. The campaign was a mess: when I visited the Party's "media center," at its New Delhi headquarters, on Akbar Road, all I found was one sleeping man, a telephone, a typewriter, and a tattered poster of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Then the new Mrs. Gandhi—Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of Indira's son Rajiv—emerged from seclusion to campaign on behalf of Congress. She made her first speech on January 11th, in Sriperumbudur, where her husband was murdered, in the late spring of 1991, and told the crowds, "Devotion to India brings me before you, not a desire for political office." She darted across the subcontinent by jet and helicopter, visiting a hundred and thirty-eight constituencies in a thirty-four-day tour. By the end of February, the country's largest weekly news magazine, *India Today*, declared that Sonia Gandhi's campaign was "unparalleled in electoral history," and claimed that she had "virtually hijacked the Congress Party." When the votes were counted, Congress and its allies had won a hundred and sixty-six seats (an increase of twenty-eight seats from the previous election, in 1996), the United Front had won ninety-six seats, and the B.J.P. and its allies, while winning two hundred and fifty-one seats, had fallen short of the required majority.

Throughout the election, Sonia Gandhi drew larger crowds than any of her rivals. Toward the end of her campaign, I went to a rally attended by about eighty thousand people at the Ram Lila Ground, not far from Old Delhi's Red Fort, where the Mogul emperors once lived in state, surrounded by half-naked eunuchs. People were streaming toward the stadium, wearing Congress badges, rosettes, sunshades, and hair bands, some barefoot in dhotis, some in shirts and ties. An orange truck roared past carrying dozens of women waving flags. An auto rickshaw went by with a pair of bell-shaped speakers attached to its roof and a man in the back blaring the injunction "*Bharat ki eklauti bahu, Sonia Gandhi*"—"India's one and only daughter-in-law, Sonia Gandhi."

By the time Sonia arrived, five hours later, it was dark. The crowd surged forward against bamboo and rope barriers. Policemen pushed screaming people this way and that, and beat some of them with sticks. Dozens of Special Protection Group, or S.P.G., agents barked into walkie-talkies. On the platform, everybody disappeared, but a minute later there she was—clearly Sonia, head down, mouth set tightly, no time to waste, scurrying up to the front like her late mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi, and wearing a chunky watch like Indira Gandhi's. Behind her were her twenty-six-year-old daughter, Priyanka, tall and striking, waving frantically, and her son, Rahul, twenty-seven, smiling and smiling.

Sitaram Kesri, the president of the Congress Party, introduced Sonia. Kesri, a squat, unimpressive old man who lives with four pet Pomeranians and a spittoon, is theoretically the most important person in the Party. But nobody listened to him; indeed, he was jeered, and sat down.

Sonia began reading her speech in a woeful voice, in heavily accented Hindi, telling the story of her life: how she had taken the bullet-riddled body of her mother-in-law to the hospital through the streets of Delhi, and how she had sacrificed her husband for India. She told us that she had arrived from Italy, in 1968, with a return ticket, "but Delhi was the place of my second birth, and the

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ticket, like my past, was lost in the mists of time." Beside me, an old man with a long, yellowing beard and a strong nose was sobbing, tears running down his pitted face. Behind him, a middle-aged woman, huddled into her sari, was dabbing at her eyes with a pink tissue and shaking her head. When Sonia ended, repeating *"Jai Hind!"*—"Hail India!"—three times, just as Indira Gandhi used to do, the delighted crowd stampeded out into the streets, where sweet venders were waiting, their wooden carts piled high with dripping blobs of color.

It is apparent that without the dramatic intervention of Sonia Gandhi Congress would have been pushed toward oblivion. This was one of the most critical elections in the Party's long history, its last chance to reform and reconstruct itself. But the election also demonstrated just how much Indian democracy has changed over the last ten years. In the new Lok Sabha, about forty per cent of the seats are held by smaller parties. The third-largest grouping (after the B.J.P. and Congress), the United Front, is itself an alliance of more than a dozen factions, ranging from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to the Forward Bloc. As soon as it was evident that voting had produced a hung parliament, in which no party alone could form a government, intense horse trading began. Rival leaders were ferried among New Delhi's elegant white bungalows in their official vehicles, red lights flashing and sirens at full blast. Each of the small parties was trying to extract maximum concessions in exchange for the support of a potential government. Such concessions might take the form of a demand for certain ministerial portfolios, or for a new railway line to a particular city, or even for the dismissal of an inimical state government.

All last week, rumors flew back and forth as deals were struck. The disparate participants in the new parliament swirled around each other in a complex mating dance as the B.J.P. tried to form a minority administration. As for the Congress Party, it may fail to be part of a government in the immediate future, but Sonia Gandhi has succeeded in insuring the survival both of the Party and of the dynasty of her adopted family.

South Asia's female leaders—Indira Gandhi; Sonia Gandhi; Mrs. Bandaranaike, of Sri Lanka; Sheikh Hasina Wajid and Khaleda Zia, of Bangladesh; and Benazir Bhutto, of Pakistan—have something in common apart from their gender. Each is either the daughter or the widow of a male political figure.

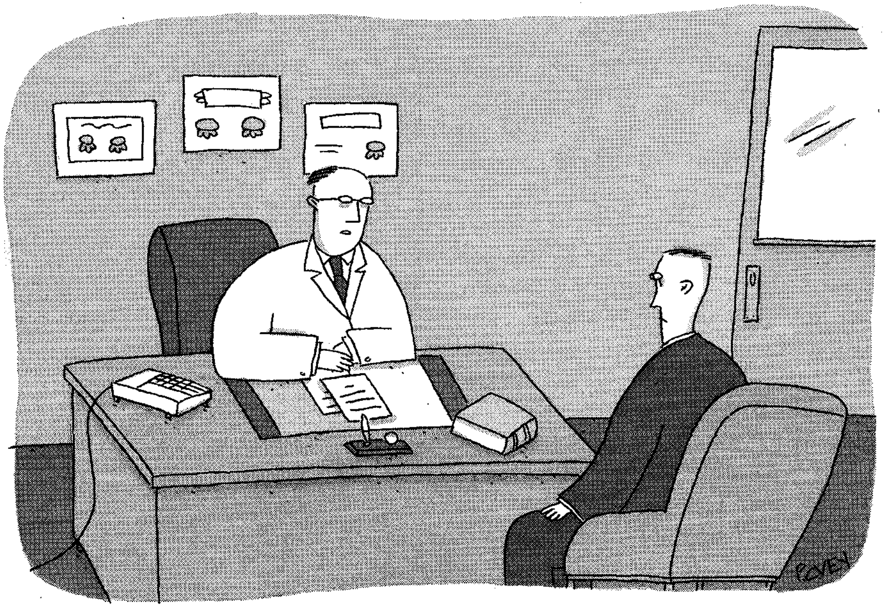
Half a century of Congress's—and India's—history is incarnated in the unlikely figure of Sonia Gandhi. She was born in 1946, and was reared in a rigidly traditional household in a small industrial town in northern Italy. Her father, Stefano Maino, was a builder, a stern self-made man who had fought alongside the Wehrmacht against the Russians on the eastern front, and who remained an unrepentant Fascist until his death. A leather-bound collection of Mussolini's speeches sat proudly in his front room. Sonia and her two sisters were not permitted to date boys unchaperoned. Yet, when Sonia was eighteen, her father allowed her to go to a language school in Cambridge, England.

In January, 1965, Sonia Maino was eating lunch in the Varsity Restaurant, in Cambridge, when she was spotted by a man at a nearby table. He was Rajiv Gandhi, aged twenty, and he was with a fellow-undergraduate, Christian von Stieglitz, with whom he shared a house. "Who is that gorgeous lady over there?" Rajiv asked Chris, who recalls thinking that such a remark was unlike Rajiv. "He was so handsome then and had lots of admirers, but he always kept them at arm's length," Chris says. He knew Sonia slightly and spoke Italian, so he introduced them. In spite of the linguistic barrier, the attraction between Rajiv and Sonia was mutual, intense, and permanent. Initially, there was opposition from both families, but, three years after this first enounter, they married. A London friend who knew them at the time describes their relationship as "the greatest love story." She adds, "They were incredibly close, right until his death. I've never known any couple like that."

Sonia has admitted that she had no knowledge of the subcontinent beyond "a vague idea that India existed somewhere in the world with its snakes, elephants, and jungles." Still, when she and Rajiv married, she left Europe and moved into the family house in New Delhi. The Gandhis' was a shared home, with the different generations—Indira, Rajiv and his brother, Sanjay, and, later, Sanjay's teen-age wife, Maneka—living and eating together. Sonia was content to play the role of the faithful daughter-in-law, the *bahu*, running the household, buying clothes for Indira, and putting up with Sanjay's temper tantrums. Indira Gandhi quickly grew fond of Sonia, relying on her for both practical and emotional support.

In a household that was dominated by politics, Rajiv and Sonia led an apolitical life and avoided the more glamorous end of New Delhi society. Rajiv, who had dropped out of both Cambridge and—after a brief stint in the bread section at the Co-Op bakery, in Cambridge—Imperial College, London, worked as a pilot for the notoriously incompetent Indian Airlines, where he was renowned as a stickler for efficiency.

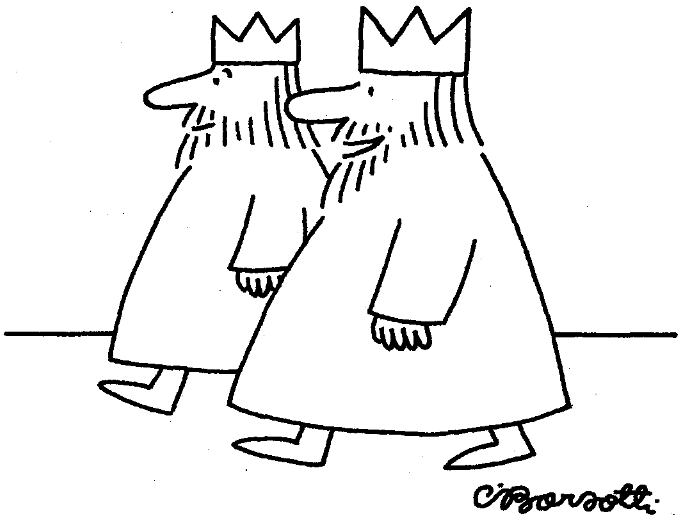
Rajiv disliked the burden of expecta-



"You have a nonlethal form of anthrax."

tion placed on him by his ancestry. Indira's grandfather Motilal Nehru had given up a prosperous career as a barrister to join the Indian National Congress, the forerunner of the Congress Party. Her father, Jawaharlal, a charismatic, moody, patrician idealist, became independent India's first Prime Minister, in 1947. Indira, Rajiv, and Sanjay lived in his official residence during his seventeen years as Prime Minister. Feroze Gandhi, a hulking left-wing M.P. and former insurance salesman, was a semidetached member of the ménage, having provided Indira with a pair of children and a surname that left a vague but erroneous impression that she was connected to the Mahatma.

There is no real evidence that Nehru foresaw a dynastic role for his family. It was the untimely death of his successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, that catapulted Indira into high office. In many ways, she was a disaster for India: she was a crude, if shrewd, manipulator of popular sentiment whose rule included a savage repression of civil liberties. But her recalcitrant wrongheadedness and her incredible resilience in the face of adversity made her a singular figure in Indian history. Eventually, after Sanjay's death, in an air crash in 1980, Rajiv acquiesced to his mother's demands that he follow her into politics. (Sonia, in her own words, "fought like a tigress" to dissuade him.) Installed as an M.P. in a safe family seat, he told an interviewer, "The way I see it is that Mummy had to be helped somehow."



"The food's good, and although I've asked them not to, over and over, they always make a big fuss."

• •

ONE morning in October, 1984, Sonia was preparing for her bath when she heard what sounded like a Diwali firecracker. She ran out of the house to find Indira bleeding to death, having been shot by her own Sikh guards. She had been murdered because she had violently suppressed a Sikh separatist movement in the Punjab and desecrated Sikhism's holiest shrine, the Golden Temple, in Amritsar. That night, Rajiv—devoid of even rudimentary ministerial experience, but a focus of high aspiration among the now leaderless Congress activists—was sworn in as India's new Prime Minister.

According to Sonia's closest friends, it took her "years, many years" to come to terms with her mother-in-law's death. She became silent for long periods of time, and avoided seeing people. She took up art restoration as a hobby, and edited the correspondence between Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The two volumes of letters are indicative of Sonia's style: methodical, professional, selective, and well presented, with a little help from her friends. Equally characteristic is the fact that restrictions have been placed on access to the originals.

As the new Prime Minister, the diffident and unassuming Rajiv was full of optimism. Yet he was utterly unqualified for the job, and soon squandered the political capital that had been invested in him, manipulating India's communal agenda and getting involved militarily in the neighboring island of Sri Lanka. Nehru's idealism became mired in the hard world of nineteen-eighties India.

Bribery and kickbacks on government contracts became routine, although the extent to which Rajiv himself profited is still strongly debated. What is certain is that he turned a blind eye to corruption and injustice among his cronies. According to a senior source within New Delhi's intelligence community, Rajiv sanctioned the kneecapping of a Sikh militant suspected of involvement in Indira's assassination. The most serious scandal of his premiership involved the Indian government's award of a contract for field guns to the Swedish arms company Bofors. An ongoing investigation by India's Central Bureau of Investigation has shown that millions of dollars in commissions were paid into five overseas accounts. The C.B.I. named Ottavio Quattrocchi, a flashy Italian businessman and fixer with close connections to Rajiv and Sonia, as one of the account holders, and revealed that money was paid from the five accounts into a sixth, still unidentified account. The B.J.P. alleges that Sonia was the beneficiary.

Rajiv lost power in 1989 and returned to the campaign trail for the 1991 general election, reinventing himself as a man of the people and admitting to past mistakes. On May 21st, he arrived exhausted for an evening rally in the small town of Sriperumbudur, fifty kilometres from Madras. Among the crowd was a young woman called Dhanu, a Tamil Tiger terrorist set on avenging Rajiv Gandhi's military escapade in Sri Lanka. She was wearing a long orange *salwar kameez* and beneath it a denim vest, its pockets packed with RDX plastic explosive and metal pellets. Dhanu pushed through the crowd toward Rajiv, managing to slip a garland of sandalwood shavings around his neck. As she bent down to touch his feet, as if in homage, he stopped and bowed slightly over her. At that instant, she pressed a toggle switch on her belt, killing twenty-eight people.

One eyewitness remembers hearing a low *woomph* as the crowd absorbed the shock of the blast. "It looked like a red flower unfolding in slow motion, and then I felt the shock waves and smelt the RDX," this witness recalls. Rajiv's aide Suman Dubey ran up onto the stage shouting, "Where is Rajiv?" Then he

"Frankly, it sucks. On the other hand, there's nothing in it to offend China."

looked down at the tangled mass of bodies covered in red marks, "like chicken pox," and saw what looked like a piece of his boss's clothing. Rajiv's body had been ripped apart, his insides torn out and part of his skull blown off. At 10:30 P.M., Rajiv's secretary, V. George, informed Sonia that there had been a bomb blast. An hour later, she received confirmation of her husband's death from a distraught, blood-soaked Dubey.

After Rajiv's assassination, Sonia retreated into herself, drawing consolation from her children and her home, which became a shrine to her beloved martyred husband. A family friend who visited after a long hiatus found the atmosphere completely changed. "The house was like a museum to his memory," he said. Sonia's circle of trusted allies contracted. Today, she relies upon a handful of female friends, including Manjulika Dubey (Suman's wife, a former leftist), who is her closest confidante; the art conservator Rupika Chawla; and the interior designer Sunita Kohli. From 1991 until January of 1998, Sonia made only a handful of public appearances, relying instead on intermediaries for contact with the outside world. She became an object of fascination—the great enigma, about whom everyone has a hypothesis. She is known as the hermit of 10 Janpath (the address of her New Delhi home), the Sphinx, the Roman Empress, the Mona Lisa.

SONIA GANDHI has never publicly answered a single question, even now that she is the most prominent figure in Indian politics. Even when party officials come to see her at 10 Janpath, she usually sits quietly, nodding from time to time, as they speak. Her protracted, ambiguous silences are decoded later for these hapless visitors by V. George, who became Sonia's secretary after Rajiv's death. George is a police constable's son from the Syrian Christian community in Kerala. In 1977, he began work in Delhi as a minor office assistant at the Congress headquarters, and by the time Rajiv came to power he was the one whose door opened into the Prime Minister's office. He became the indispensable executor of all Rajiv's wishes, typing his most secret documents and regulating access. Today, he provides selected journalists with hints about Sonia's intentions, and briefs against her enemies—unattributably.

Getting to see George—the "V" stands for Vincent, a name he prefers not to use—takes time. After my credentials had been thoroughly checked, and many words had been placed in different ears, I was summoned to Sonia's heavily guarded residence and was allowed to enter after submitting to an intense security check. George's office was tiny. Opposite the desk was the door to Sonia Gandhi's capacious office, and through it I could hear her low, plaintive voice, with its distinctive Italian accent. As George spoke, he folded his fingers together in a deliberate way in front of his chest. He was sharp, compact, and immensely diplomatic, his nut-brown snake's eyes guarding each unattributable word he uttered.

George avoids saying anything about Sonia's political vision of India. Indeed, it's not clear whether or not she has one. My impression is that she has an inclination toward free-market economic reform and technological innovation, and a genuine dislike of the B.J.P.'s brand of religious communalism. Beyond that, she believes in benevolent, unaccountable, feudal rule, a *raja-praja*, or monarch-subject, relationship between the government and the people. When I asked one of her closest advisers what her political agenda was, he pondered before replying, "Well, it's the same as that of her husband."

WHY Sonia Gandhi chose to act in this election is greatly disputed, and numerous theories have been suggested. Some members of the New Delhi élite, who have long dismissed her as a dim shopaholic and "an Italian au pair," find it hard to comprehend her effectiveness. According to those close to her, she could not bear to see the legacy of the Nehru-Gandhi family destroyed and was acting selflessly, having seen Congress disintegrating in front of her eyes. A member of her inner circle put it simply: "She has this idea of noblesse oblige."

In the immediate aftermath of Rajiv's death, Sonia was pressed by members of Congress to take an active, or at least a ceremonial, role in the Party. She refused, but when important visitors came to town—Nelson Mandela, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Yasir Arafat—they went to her house. As the years passed, she built up her influence, gradually and skillfully, through a careful use of selective leaks and briefings. There were speculative reports that she would enter politics, but these were never confirmed or denied. Last summer, she quietly became a member of the Congress Party.

Sonia Gandhi's campaign was, in effect, a takeover of the remnants of Congress. Big-business backers funded the operation, aware of future benefits of a Sonia-controlled government. Congress politicians favored by Sonia ran a slick campaign, with the help of a variety of political journalists and family associates. Speeches came from different sources, the final arbiter being Sonia herself, aided by Priyanka, who crafted many of her mother's most notable phrases. According to sources inside the household, Sonia could be heard declaiming her speeches late into the night to Suman Dubey. Dubey has denied that he played a pivotal role, saying that he is simply a "family friend."

The level of secrecy surrounding the campaign, and Sonia's possible intentions, was scrupulously maintained. Ever since Rajiv entered politics, in 1980, friends of Sonia have been bound by a collective code of silence. If she hears rumors that someone she knows has spoken about her, either socially or to the press, that person is dropped immediately. She is, by all accounts, lastingly vindictive toward those whom she believes have betrayed her. The depth of worry—even of fear—is palpable. None of her immediate entourage would speak to me while I was researching this article, except anonymously. The meetings I did have took place furtively. Someone who has known Sonia for more than thirty years became breathless when I telephoned, and whispered, "If she sees anything, anything—if I was misquoted—it would be the end of my friendship."

One former friend, who spoke on the condition of anonymity despite having been ostracized for more than a decade, told me, "Sonia demands loyalty at any cost. . . . Disagreement on any important issue is seen as being disloyal. . . . I don't know this person now. Her character has changed so much—I see a hardness, I see her trying to look like her mother-in-law. Even her body language is aggressive, which was never the case before. She used to be terribly shy and socially insecure and was only happy when she was with her friends."

THE abandonment of her own identity was at the center of Sonia's campaign. She was the ideal *bahu*, the doormat daughter-in-law who serves her husband's family in any way possible. Sonia's osmosis into the Gandhi family made the opposition jibes of "*Italy ki Maharani*"—"Queen of Italy"—and the references to her Roman Catholic faith ineffectual. These did not touch a popular chord because in traditional Indian culture a woman is subsumed into her husband's family. (It also helps that Sonia Gandhi, who has dark hair and brown skin and always dresses in a sari, looks much like the Nehrus, who are high-caste North Indians. If she were of blond Northern European or black African origin, she would not be credible as an Indian leader.)

In the campaign, the wording of the speeches, the nature of the media exposure, the iconography of the rallies, and the timing of particular attacks on her rivals were all shrewdly thought out. She made a blatant pitch for the Muslim vote, declaring that the Babri Masjid (a mosque in Ayodhya that was smashed by Hindu fanatics in 1992) would still be standing today if her husband had lived. She said that he had told her that "he would stand in front of it and they would have to kill him first." She made a bid for the traditional women's vote, saying that not only was she the daughter of India but India was the land of her *suhaag*—a culturally complex term that denotes the bliss that comes from being a married woman. Most astonishing of all, she sought the Sikh vote, by apologizing for Operation Blue Star, Indira Gandhi's storming of the Golden Temple. When I discussed this with one of her advisers, he said that she had actually been apologizing "for the suffering of Blue Star." He added, "She's not apologizing for the political decision. These are carefully crafted words."

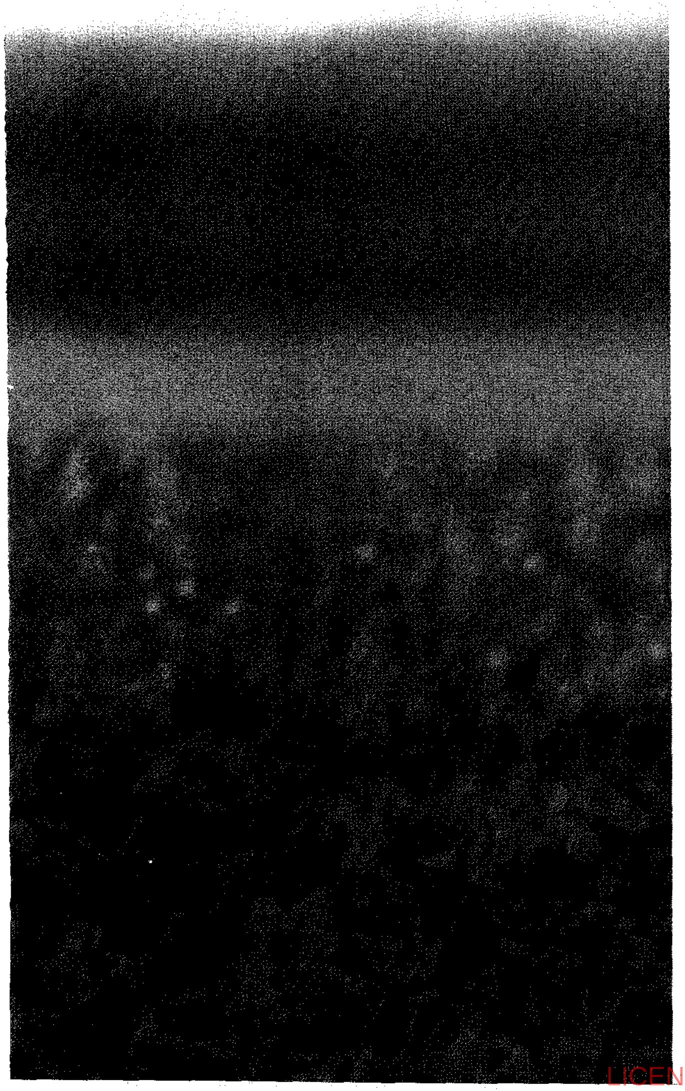
Congress has always relied on marginal sections of society—the lower castes and tribes, the poor and the Muslim and Christian minorities—but the Party has also, at times, treated these groups with contempt, as if they were nothing but a vote bank. In recent years, such groups have begun to break off from Congress. Rural Muslims and members of the lower castes took to voting for local parties rather than for Congress. Sonia made a concerted effort to draw these voters back.

Yet she was operating in a fragmented political landscape, a landscape that had changed radically since the days of Nehru, Indira, and Rajiv. In the last three elections, regional parties have won a notable number of parliamentary seats. (In some cases, this has been the result of intense fractionalization, as a candidate in a five-way battle is returned with around twenty-five per cent of the vote.) One of the most striking achievements of the B.J.P. in this election was its ability to cast off its pariah status and form strategic allegiances with smaller parties in order to deliver seats in regions where it was weak or unrepresented.

MEDAK, a few hours' drive from the city of Hyderabad, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, in south-central India, was Indira Gandhi's seat at the time of her death. The voters there are predominantly Telugu-speaking agricultural laborers who live in impoverished conditions. Few of them have ever travelled as far as Hyderabad, let alone to Delhi. When, in the middle of her countrywide campaign, Sonia Gandhi descended from a helicopter to speak for twenty minutes to a cheering crowd of more than a hundred thousand people, she represented a distant ideal—a deracinated image that was unconnected to the reality of having to crop sugarcane by hand twelve hours a day.

The actions of the state government, which is currently controlled by a regional party, the Telugu Desam Party (T.D.P.), are what count in Medak, not pan-Indian politics. The Party increased the price of rice from two rupees to three and a half rupees per kilo in early 1997, and that had a severe impact on poor households. Will the price drop? Will arrack be prohibited? Will cheap electricity for the agricultural sector be phased out? None of these matters were addressed by Sonia Gandhi. Instead, as she did throughout her campaign, she denounced communal passions, told her life story once more, and praised the legacy of the Congress Party.

I spoke to Kondraopalli Pochamma, an agricultural laborer in her early forties who had rings on her toes and bad teeth, and was dressed in a thin yellow sari. She earns fifteen to twenty rupees (around half a dollar) a day, when she can find work. She had come to the rally to see Sonia "and receive her message, but I couldn't follow a damn thing," she told me, in Telugu. "Sonia's accent wasn't like Indira Gandhi's." All the same, she would



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vote for Congress. "Who else is there? Only the family has a soft corner and a wish to help the poor, especially women. Our only hope is Sonia—we trust her, because she, too, has suffered."

The final election results in Andhra Pradesh are instructive. While the advent of Sonia enabled Congress to hold its ground, it also helped to take several seats away from the T.D.P., which might have been willing to vote with Congress in the Lok Sabha. As a result, any such alliance appears unlikely, and that benefits the B.J.P. Throughout the country, Congress received a marginally higher proportion of the popular vote than the B.J.P., yet the B.J.P. was far more effective at turning its votes into seats. In Medak, Sonia Gandhi's universal appeal may have backfired in a context where backroom alliance building might have been more successful.

As it became clear that the smaller parties would be of critical importance in the formation of the new government, powerful regional leaders flew in to New Delhi last week to negotiate and to extract their pound of flesh. These pragmatic alliances are transforming the democracy that has operated since independence. This may be beneficial, since it limits the potential for extremism. A B.J.P. government would, for instance, be unlikely to pursue some of its more unsavory anti-Muslim policies if it had to rely upon comparatively moderate coalition partners. But the dangers of direct payoffs, of dubious, collapsible bargains, and of short-lived, ineffective administrations are significant.

The B.J.P. is a relatively new force in Indian politics, but many of its leading figures, such as its candidate for Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and its chief ideologue, L. K. Advani, are in their seventies, and they know that they may never again have a comparable chance for power. Although Sonia Gandhi will have to engage in dealmaking if she is to rebuild the base on which Congress will depend in the future, there is a growing feeling among the Party's leaders that perhaps they should sit tight and let the B.J.P. do its worst. After the 1996 election, the B.J.P. formed a government that lasted only thirteen days, because it was unable to win a vote of confidence on the floor of the Lok Sabha. Such an eventuality could easily be repeated. There was a powerful anti-incumbent vote across India in this election, and there could be advantages in not being tainted by office when the next polls are called.

The Nehruvian vision of a secular, centrally controlled India looks uncertain, but Sonia Gandhi is still fighting for it. There is an assumption in New Delhi society that she craves power for its own ends. I believe that her aims are more complicated. She is engaged in a holding operation, trying to secure the future of her children by preserving the prominence of the Nehru-Gandhi name in public life. Her husband's death is the central fact in her life and for her Congress is a family heirloom that must be maintained and passed on, although in attempting to do so she must be painfully aware that she puts herself and her children at great personal risk. During the next decade, both Rahul and Priyanka will be in a position to move into active politics. As one of Sonia's advisers told me, both children are watching the situation with great interest, for politics is "in their blood."

In the meantime, there are indications that Sonia is determined to capitalize on her present status as the savior of a collapsing party. In an unusual burst of glasnost, V. George told me that Sonia intends to try to restructure Congress in time for the next general election. "She's very happy with the results," he said. "The Party was in disarray and on the verge of disintegration, and now look at it. Madam wants to help the Party actively, to take part, and the leaders have been informed on this." When I suggested that she might be exhausted by the election campaign, he responded, "She didn't travel sixty thousand kilometres to sit at home now. There's no point in doing all this and then staying in the background."

Late on Thursday, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution praising Sonia's role in the election. It stated that it was "her tireless and strenuous campaigning throughout the length and breadth of the country which galvanized all the Congress workers," and claimed that "the Congress Party owes its electoral gains to her alone." When I asked one of Sonia's leading courtiers to decode this, he said that it amounted to an invitation to become president of the Party.

"Is this the best thing for Congress?" I asked.

"It's going to happen," came the reply. "What else can they do?" ♦

"Wonderful."
—Thomas Keneally

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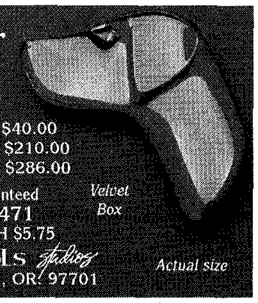

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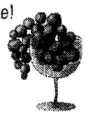

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ANNALS OF HOLLYWOOD

THE FLICK FACTORY

In an era of Titanic movie costs, a B-movie mogul has found a way to make low-budget bankable.

BY MARK SINGER

TEL AVIV, 1972: Rokach Avenue, near the intersection with Haifa Road, is the site of the only drive-in movie theatre in Israel. A slate-blue evening sky has swallowed the Mediterranean sunset, cars arriving for the first feature have illuminated their headlamps, and Avi Lerner, who manages the concession stand, is poised to hear the cash register sing. At twenty-five, Lerner—university graduate, former paratroop instructor, veteran of the Six-Day War—understands, among other things, arithmetic. The audience demographics will shift as the night progresses: a family crowd for the seven-o'clock feature; adolescents and post-adolescents for the action movie at nine-thirty; soft-core-porn aficionados at midnight. Standing beneath the awning of the cinder-block concession stand, at the crest of a slope, Lerner appraises the idling traffic. Three hundred cars can occupy the stretch of service road between the theatre entrance and the ticket booth; a backup all the way to Rokach Avenue means five hundred more; a traffic jam on Rokach translates into a thousand-car full house. The average vehicle contains 2.2 occupants; one of every 2.6 ticket buyers will also buy a medium soda; every third person will want popcorn; every fourth will order a hot dog, the most expensive and perishable item on the menu.

A quarter century later, Lerner's confident approach to the motion-picture business is extrapolated from his nights at the drive-in. What's wrong with Hollywood, it seems—the Hollywood of the major studios, that is, as opposed to the parallel-universe B-movie Hollywood, where Lerner has quietly compiled a steady track record and an ample fortune—is not that the studio geniuses have a cynical disregard for art but that they have a pitiful indifference to simple mathematics. Since moving to Los Angeles, six years ago, and setting up shop under the name Nu Image, he's produced and released seventy-eight movies. That seventy-seven have turned a profit is testimony to Lerner's rigorous devotion to certain precepts: begin with a low budget and obey it; anticipate your audience; make sure you're getting all your money back before you shoot a frame of film; don't be greedy. To ignore these injunctions is to be stuck at the end of the day with the equivalent of a bunch of leftover hot dogs.

Unless a last-minute invitation materializes, Lerner will spend Oscar night at his four-bedroom ranch house in the Hollywood Hills (he also has homes in Tel Aviv, Johannesburg, Cape Town, London, and New York) watching the ceremonies on television. He isn't a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, but he sees the same movies that the voters see and then some, and his choice for Best Picture would be "Good Will Hunting"—"a very good, well-made movie, and not one that you had to spend unaccountable money to produce."

What about "Titanic"?

"It was O.K., but I still don't believe it should be nominated for an Oscar. It's not fair. If I gave my son two hundred million to play around with, he could make the same picture."

"We're not trying to hide what we're doing," Lerner says. "If I'm making a B movie, I'm not making a C or D or Z movie."

FERGUS GREER

Though the term "B movie" connotes schlock, being called a B-movie producer doesn't offend Lerner. "It's not a dirty word," he says. "We're not trying to hide what we're doing. If I'm making a B movie, I'm not making a C or D or Z movie. At least it comes right after 'A.'" Anyway, what was it, other than a seventy-million-dollar budget, that qualified "Independence Day" as an A movie? When, this summer, Sony disgorges a hundred-and-twenty-five-million-dollar remake of "Godzilla," in what category does that belong? If Lerner declines to pay Stallone's or Schwarzenegger's price, and instead anoints the hypertrophied and trigger-happy Frank Zagarino to grace "Cyborg Cop III," "Operation Delta Force," the multiple "Project Shadowchaser" sequels, "Warhead," and "Never Say Die," to what extent is humankind deprived or diminished?

What, I once asked Lerner, fitted his definition of a good movie? "I would say one that makes money, that a lot of people see and tell their friends to go see," he replied. "And it must feel emotionally true. I believe in making movies that give hope. In my movies, the hero never starts a fight by himself. He's always in a situation where he has no other choice. He will never go into the street and kill

"Remarkable."
—Publishers Weekly
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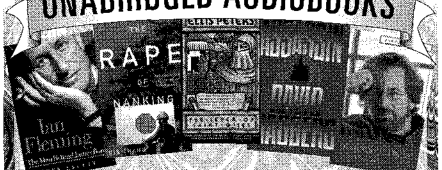

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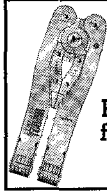

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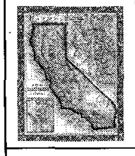

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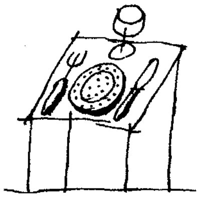
three people just because he's taking drugs and feels happy. Only if somebody is after him or his wife or girlfriend, then he will kill. I know the whole debate about making violent movies and programs that children might see on TV. But I ask, before TV there was already violence in this world, right? In the movies I make, you see always that the good people win and the bad people lose. I have a different problem when it comes to making these movies: who do we identify as the bad people? No more can you use Arabs as bad guys, the Russians aren't bad anymore, Martians the same thing. You can't use Germans, because they're too important a market. How much more Second World War and First World War do we need to fight? It's enough already. The same for the Japanese. Now all that's left are the Libyans and the North Koreans. That's my big problem: finding the new bad guys."



TALL and loose-limbed, with a fleshy face, shaggy and curly gray hair, a surplus chin, and bags under his light-blue eyes, Lerner possesses the smile and low-key manner of someone who trusts his ability to charm. He also trusts his own track record, which has been an extended exercise in vertical integration. In 1975, three years after he began toiling in the concession stand, he put together a group of investors and bought the drive-in (which he still owns and hopes to replace someday with what he envisions as "the biggest entertainment complex in the Middle East"). During the next five years, he co-produced five low-budget comedies and dramas, acquired a chain of six movie theatres in Tel Aviv, and cornered the wholesale video market for the entire country. Upon selling those two enterprises, he netted more than four million dollars.

The theatre-chain buyers were Menachem Golan and Yoram Globus, a mercurial pair who during the eighties gained notoriety in Hollywood for their flamboyant and ultimately self-destructive stewardship of Cannon Films ("Death Wish," "Runaway Train," "Bloodsport"). For three years—first in London and then in South Africa, where, in 1984, Lerner settled with his wife and two children—he produced films for Cannon. Golan and Globus specialized in unpredictability. When Lerner had enough, he and three partners—his brother, Danny; another Israeli, Danny Dimbort; and Trevor Short, a native of Zimbabwe—formed Nu Metro Entertainment, a mini-conglomerate that included a film-production company, theatrical-film and video-distribution entities, and a cinema chain that eventually expanded to a hundred and sixty screens. By 1992, everything but the production company had been sold. "Somebody made us an offer I couldn't understand," Lerner said. "So I sold." The proceeds became the source of Nu Image's initial fifteen-million-dollar capitalization, and Dimbort and Short remained his partners. Danny Lerner, who had overseen the making of fifty Nu Metro films, stayed in Johannesburg, where he continues to supervise the production facility.

At Cannes, in the spring of 1992, distributors picked up the first two completed pictures in the Nu Image inventory—"Lethal Ninja" and "Terminator Woman." The former rolled into a single plot the prophecies of Nostradamus, espionage, martial-arts swordplay, and a conspiracy to poison the water supply of an unnamed African country. In the latter, a couple of L.A. cops on a business trip to Africa find themselves embroiled in some diverting intrigue involving kidnapping, seduction, and hidden gold. What the two productions had in common—beyond, that is, their lack of resemblance to the handiwork of Merchant and Ivory—was the modesty of their financial ambitions. Each cost less than a million dollars to make and each netted about a half million. In a sense, these were riskier ventures than Nu Image's subsequent films, because they didn't adhere to what has become the Lerner standard formula: pay for everything with the sale of the foreign theatrical, TV, and video rights; then shoot the movie; then peddle the domestic rights and pocket the proceeds as profit. "We do the selling three hundred sixty-five days a year," Lerner told me, but in fact most of the marketing takes place during a half-dozen annual trade shows in Europe and the United States. "We know exactly how much a Frank Zagarino picture can be sold for in Thailand, how much a Michael Dudikoff can be sold for in France. We know what Jeff Speakman brings in Germany, what Michael Pare will do in Japan."

About a third of Nu Image's releases are still shot in South Africa, including, last year, two "Operation Delta Force" sequels and "Sweepers," a Dolph Lundgren vehicle in which the great Swedish artist—about whom Lerner has observed "in real life he's a hell of a nice guy and in this movie he's also a good guy but he is forced to kill hundreds of bad people"—is dispatched to Angola as the head of a minesweeping operation called the Humanitarian Order of Chivalry. Another third of Nu Image's pictures are made in the United States, and the others get spread all over the map—Canada, Israel, Eastern Europe, anywhere Lerner can minimize his dealings with union labor. Boaz Davidson, a veteran Israeli director who often works with Lerner, told me not long ago, "I think of Avi as a living contradiction—a guy who, on the one hand, believes in sure things and, on the other, has spent his life in the movie industry, which is so risky. I'll tell you this: Avi feels very safe around explosions. But if a movie is too arty or philosophical it's not his turf."

Though there's no chance that Lerner will soon abandon bread-and-butter million-and-a-half-dollar adrenaline pumpers, last year half of the company's productions had budgets between five million and eight million dollars. For marketing purposes, these more expensive movies, though released by Nu Image (some in partnership with Miramax), bear the logo Millennium Films, a taxonomical distinction that reflects Lerner's intention to move slightly upscale, toward bigger-name actors. Because shooting schedules are quite tight—five to seven weeks, versus fifteen weeks for a typical major-studio production—such higher-priced talent can be bought for less than outrageous prices. Typical is "The Last Days of Frankie the Fly," a 1997 noirish thriller that starred Daryl Hannah, Kiefer Sutherland, Dennis Hopper, and Michael Madsen and cost five million dollars. Why so little? "All these actors read the script and really loved the material. And, mainly, because we couldn't pay more."

"Frankie the Fly" never had a domestic theatrical release and, if it had, might easily have flopped commercially. Instead, it was broadcast by HBO as a "world première" and Lerner ended up more than a million bucks in the black. "There is a formula for making a small profit," Lerner says. "But nobody can give me a formula for spending five million or seven million that is going to bring us a hundred million. I don't believe in miracles." Not coincidentally, the only Nu Image picture ever to be released in American theatres—a ruthless morality tale called "Search & Destroy," the fruit of the painter David Salle's temporary delusion that he should be a movie director—was also the only money-loser. Even this venture Lerner regards as "definitely worthwhile," because he agreed to finance "Search & Destroy" at the urging of Martin Scorsese. "It's a fact that I worked with Scorsese," he says. "I was at his house, he listened to me, I listened to him, I spent time with him, heard his philosophy. This was the right move."

JOHN THOMPSON, a producer who often works for Nu Image, usually along with Boaz Davidson, materializes in Lerner's doorway and, like a dirty-postcard vender in Tijuana, whispers, "Hey, want to buy some dead pigeons?"

Arching his eyebrows wearily, Lerner explains to me, "We're doing a movie in Phoenix and we made a big explosion and killed some birds." Specifically, four days earlier, in the course of shooting "No Code of Conduct," a police action drama starring Martin Sheen and Charlie Sheen, some carefully staged pyrotechnics at an abandoned horse track failed to account for an avian colony roosting in the concrete grandstand. Now representatives of the Humane Society and various animal-rights groups are threatening to picket Martin Sheen's hotel and demanding a rescue effort to salvage any surviving birds.

When Davidson joins the conversation a few moments later, he and Lerner segue to a discussion of "Shadrach," a Millennium film starring Harvey Keitel and Andie MacDowell. A Southern family drama based on a William Styron story—and adapted and directed by Susanna Styron, the author's daughter—"Shadrach" is an example of Lerner's effort to wean himself from generic action thrillers. Despite certain quibbles, Lerner pronounces himself generally pleased with a recently edited cut.

Davidson changes the subject: "Avi, tell me"—he mentions a busy and bankable young actor—"how much you pay for him in an erotic thriller?"

"Erotic?" Lerner asks. "How erotic?"

"Very erotic."

"Three million."

"His agency says eight million."

"No. Three million. Maybe three and a half. Or tell him, as we say in Hebrew, take it or leave it, and if he leaves it, fuck off."

NU IMAGE'S headquarters is an unpretentious two-story building on Sunset Boulevard, in West Hollywood. Fifteen people work there, and from what I observed during the better part of one recent week, they are fruitfully occupied. Lerner is known for making himself readily accessible—the door to his office is always open—as a result of which, he suspects, he routinely witnesses as much self-delusion as anyone in the business. "Ninety-nine per cent of

"What, no veggies?"

"Unforgettable."
—Maxine Hong Kingston

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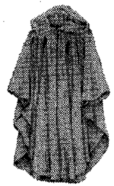

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the people who come here are bullshitters," he told me. "Hollywood is so much bullshit." His tone was jovial and it was clear that "bullshit" referred not to calculated mendacity but to the hallucinatory optimism of people gripped by the conviction that a story about a male-female pair of F.B.I. agents who go from enemies to lovers as they defy their superiors and desperately chase after a group of serial-killing paramilitary psychos will progress inevitably to a heartfelt acceptance speech from the proscenium of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

One afternoon, a young writer named Bill Johnson, who appeared fully aware that he hadn't wandered into Disney or Universal, arrived to discuss "The Break," a prison action thriller, the fourth draft of which he'd just completed. An associate named Joey De Pinto, who was supposed to join the meeting, had been detained by car trouble, Johnson explained. Lerner, a couple of inches into one of his two daily Monte Cristo Torpedoes, gestured with the cigar that this was not a worrisome complication. He hadn't actually read any of Johnson's previous drafts, relying instead, as he invariably does, upon "coverage"—a three-page synopsis prepared by a script analyst. The most recent coverage report encapsulated the premise: "A man just arrested for protesting the I.R.S. has to rescue his wife when she is taken hostage by a group of prisoners during a riot that is meant to disguise a robbery led by guards and inmates of the warden's clandestine drug lab which is hidden in secret tunnels below the jail."

"So, basically, this is another pass I've done," Johnson said. "I've added the idea that this prison is part of a corporation that's buying prisons in the United States and running them on a private basis. And what's happening is they're using men who've been forgotten by society—nobody comes to visit them anymore, their families have forgotten them—they're using them as slave labor underneath the prison in a drug lab. And that's how the prison is actually able to make a profit. You can think of this as 'Die Hard' in a prison."

"'Die Hard' in a prison—yeah," Lerner said, nodding.

"I found that the last draft I showed you was three drafts removed from my original draft, and several people liked my original draft better. It was really more straightforward."

"How's the dialogue now?" Lerner asked.

"I think I've simplified things."

"And you don't feel it's going to be too claustrophobic?"

"Well, I think that's one of the things that will actually work about the film—that it's going to have that very dark, very scary concept, people being forced to work underneath a prison."

"You don't want to cut to some scenes outside the prison? How much can the audience stand to look at the same walls, the same clothes?"

"I see what you're saying," Johnson agreed, pausing pensively. "Well, there's stuff happening outside with the police, so you can cut in and out. You're absolutely right about that."

"I'll tell you straight. We'll read it again, and, if we like it, then we talk. If we don't like it, then we won't talk."

"There you go," Johnson said, heading for the exit. "Hey, you gave me a shot. That's all I can ask for."

After Johnson departed, Lerner said to me, "You know, I say this sincerely: I admire these people. This fellow who was just here, he will tell you from his heart that what he's written is at least a fifty-million-dollar movie. I admire these people's patience, their dreams, their beliefs. For eight months, they eat, sleep, drink, and fuck around this movie. And their friend, their mother, their cousin tells them it's the best thing in the world. These people believe their idea will win an Oscar, win at Cannes, make a fortune. Anytime anyone asks me to include in a contract that if they win the Palme d'Or at Cannes I will give them an extra half million dollars, I say yes. Because I know I will never have to pay. But understand—I would be happy to."

"AVI, let me tell you about this young lady," Jack Gilardi said to Lerner, who, with characteristic affability, seemed willing to listen. Gilardi, an agent from International Creative Management and an endearing throwback to the black-turtleneck suède-loafer tinted-aviators gold-Rolex school, had come to Lerner's office ostensibly to discuss the casting of three movies—a hockey picture, a horse-racing picture, and a drug-smuggling-with-sharks picture set in Puerto Rico. Unexpectedly, he was accompanied by a slender woman with long honey-blond hair who wore black slacks and a black silk blouse with a trainlike appendage.

"This is Shaune Bagwell," Gilardi spieled. "She had her own cable show in Houston, Texas. She's only twenty-four years old. I met her yesterday and got terribly excited about her. She told me we're only friends. I said, 'Forget about it.' Anyway, she has meetings with the Aaron Spelling people, she's got a couple of other meetings set, but most of all I wanted you to meet her because of the amount of pictures you do and the ability she has in her drama. She's also very funny. I want to get some film on her as soon as we can. She might even be able to play the leading lady once we go to Puerto Rico. She'd have to read for the director, but I believe she has the ability to do so."

"Want me to tap-dance or something?" Shaune Bagwell asked, laughing.

"Have you got any tape?" Lerner asked.

There was a moment of silence, followed by a nervous chuckle from Gilardi.

"O.K.," Lerner said. "I see. So we put you in your first movie and then you'll have a tape. Have you studied acting?"

"I am now," Bagwell said, then mentioned a couple of acting teachers whose names Lerner seemed to recognize.

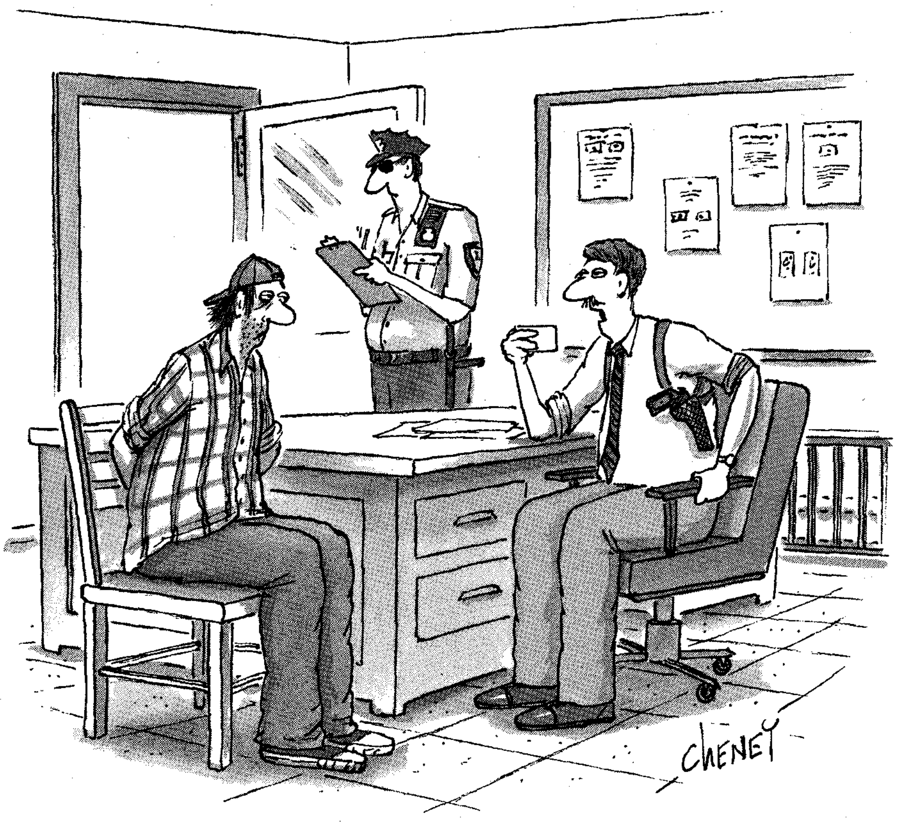
A bit more small talk ensued, Lerner asked Bagwell to send him some photographs, she left the room for a moment, and returned with a binder containing several glossies that revealed her skills as a lingerie model.

"But I can act, too," she said, smiling sincerely.

"Don't worry, after the first minute of the movie, nobody cares. But please remember, I don't make any decisions about casting. I can just give you to the director."

"Oh, I understand that."

"I'll put you with the director, and if he doesn't take you, you can shoot him."



"And if you can't afford a biographer one will be appointed for you at the state's expense."

• •

In Lerner's world, the proverbial studio-patented step deal or development deal doesn't exist. One on one with a writer, he will recite the least flattering passages of a script analyst's report and gently exhort, "Here. Make a copy of this, read it, fix the script, and bring it back to us." A dozen new screenplays float in each week, and out of this compost, the thinking goes, something worthwhile is bound to surface. "Studios commission a script, they read it, they don't like it, they give the job to another writer," he says. "They paid the first writer a half million, they pay the second writer something like that, then maybe they never make the picture. We pay from ten to fifty thousand—once, I think, we paid a hundred thousand." The writer is expected to be the most malleable element of the creative process because narrative, after all, is an endlessly malleable commodity.

Fritz Kiersch, who once directed a Lerner film, arrived one afternoon for a meeting, accompanied by Cara Sheriff and Michael Roush, would-be producers of a project titled "Black Money," with a script by Gary Goldman Steel. They seated themselves on a pair of sea-green crushed-velvet sofas and, after minimal preliminaries, launched a pitch.

"Avi, one of the reasons we thought of you is because our film is set in Africa," Kiersch said.

"South Africa?"

"It can be South Africa. It deals with lots of Africans and I know the setup that you have there."

"What's the story about?"

"It's based on some true facts," Kiersch began, then proceeded to unspool the plot: German industrialists have paid a twenty-four-million-dollar bribe to a brutal African dictator.... Because they regard him as untrustworthy, they've sprayed the money with a black dye.... If he coöperates with their exploitation of the country's mineral resources, the Germans will, at regular intervals, give him small amounts of a chemical mixture with which the currency can be literally laundered—

"How can you bring action into this?" Lerner interrupted.

"Oh, it's full of action," Cara Sheriff said.

"This is strong action-adventure," Kiersch added. "It's along the lines of 'Romancing the Stone.'"

"But are you sure it's interesting enough to the public to have a plot about these chemical things?"

"This is only a device," said Kiersch. "What happens is that our hero gets drawn into this problem—"

"Who is the hero?"

"The hero is a mercenary. He goes to get the money back. To do that, he connects with a very Danny De Vito kind of character. They need to find a chemist. The chemist is a woman. They have to

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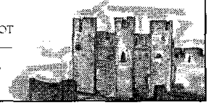

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break her out of prison. They've set up a chemistry lab. They then wash the money, but there are problems . . ."

"Again," Lerner persisted. "The thing that's worrying me—maybe I'm wrong, it's only my opinion—this is not a situation dangerous enough for the public to be afraid. Somebody's washing twenty-four million dollars—so what? Maybe if you'll start with a guy who's working in a bank. He opens a door and sees it's something to do with terrorism. Then you see an American is involved. And slowly, slowly the situation is developing."

"And then the American steals the money back," Sheriff said hopefully. "And then the revolutionaries are trying to get their hands on it to defeat the dictator and—"

"Revolutionaries? In Africa?" Lerner said. "Excuse me, but nobody in America cares about some revolutionary in Africa, I can guarantee. Nobody even cares in Africa, never mind America. In America they care only about what's going to affect them. Rwanda—unless CNN will put it in the news, nobody cares. And you know what? That's life. So convince me why somebody in America wants to see this movie. I can tell you what you should do, but this is up to you. If you make the story so that what happens with this money jeopardizes the whole economy and way of life of America, that this can affect the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States, an impact something like this, then we will look at it. What you should also do is put in a shot or two of Switzerland—establish that the whole world is worried about this. If you make the plot much more related to how we're living here in Los Angeles and New York and wherever, we'll definitely look at it."

The phone rang and Lerner took the call—Boaz Davidson reporting from Phoenix on the status of negotiations with the Humane Society. "Yeah?" Lerner said. "Did you remind him about the holiday called Thanksgiving? You know, in America every year for this holiday millions of birds are slaughtered. We killed twenty-seven pigeons. The whole world is against us. O.K. Tell me how much it costs us."

When the conversation resumed, casting options were tossed about—Peter Weller, Nick Nolte, Gérard Depardieu.

"Nolte and Depardieu I would go with in a shot, but you won't get them," Lerner said. He had summoned from an assistant two script analyses. "All I can tell you is that they both like the main character. They like the relationship with the lady chemist. But we still need to get the story right. Go talk to your writer. Ask him to have the hero doing what he does because he has no other choice. Give him a very strong motivation. If he fixes it and we get the cast, we can do it next year sometime. We can make the picture. And then we'll send you one-way to Africa."

After the meeting broke up, Lerner realized he was overdue for a screening across town—a rough cut of "On the Border," featuring Casper Van Dien, who, I was informed, was "going to be a major movie star." On our way out, we paused to study a cricket working its way across the gray carpet. "Careful, please. I don't want to touch it," Lerner pleaded. "Otherwise, they'll blame me for killing another animal."

RAISING his voice or tossing around office furniture for emphasis isn't Lerner's style. Nevertheless, dealing with actors routinely places him in circumstances that test his forbearance. "I wish one day someone would pass a law in Hollywood," he says. "Whoever takes drugs, or even doesn't show up on time, they're not allowed to work."

Without fondness, he recalls an encounter in Montana with a recalcitrant Mickey Rourke, who had holed up in a luxury bus during the filming of "F.T.W." (short for "Fuck the World"). "We were trying to make the movie, but Mickey refused to leave his bus. This was why I went to Montana, to persuade him to do his job. What did I say to him? I told him I had friends in the Mossad, the Israeli Secret Service, and if he didn't come out they would blow up the bus."

"No Code of Conduct" was Lerner's last film to wrap in 1997, and during the five weeks it was being shot he made five visits to Phoenix. Originally the project had come to Nu Image with a script co-written by Charlie Sheen and Bret Michaels, the former lead singer of the rock group Poison. The deal Lerner agreed to provided that Sheen would star and Michaels, who had previously worked on music videos but never on a feature film, would direct. A question hovering over the enterprise was whether Sheen, an avid hedonist, would remember to come to work each day.

When Lerner and I arrived in Phoenix, we were met at the airport by Boaz Davidson and John Thompson, who throughout the filming had been his emissaries on the set. We drove to Tempe, a nearby college town, and wandered into a place called the Crocodile Café, which Lerner recognized as a logical setting to gather data for an ongoing poll that he, Davidson, and Thompson were conducting. "This is a simple exercise," Lerner said. "We've been going around America asking strangers, 'Who is William Styron?' No one ever seems to know the answer." Indeed, he put the question first to a perky waitress and then to a waiter, and each time drew a cheerful blank.

"Shadrach," the recently completed film based on the Styron story, was a "great movie," Lerner assured me, but he'd suspended his usual protocols before agreeing to finance it, and his ambivalence was palpable. "With 'Shadrach' we don't look for the profit, we look for the prestige. It cost five million dollars, and selling it in the foreign market will be very difficult. This is a story about an old black man who travels from Alabama to Virginia because he is going home to die. Alabama, Virginia—who knows about these places in Japan, Austria, Thailand?"

That night's filming was taking place at an abandoned motel not far from downtown Phoenix. We were a day early for a major stunt—a car flip and explosion—but in plenty of time for a scene in which a female undercover cop, posing as a decoy prostitute, would stand on a second-floor balcony, fire her gun at a bad guy, and get fatally shot herself. The work-day was an hour and forty minutes old before the camera was ready to roll. Lerner spent this time smoking a cigar, schmoozing, and generally registering his presence. Russ Markowitz, the line producer, delivered a status report on the immolated birds. "They've done autopsies on two birds they thought were endangered species, some kind of finch, but they turned out to be common sparrows," he said. "We released a statement saying we took precautions but still made a mistake and we regret it. We might have to hire a crane to rescue some birds in the rafters with singed tail feathers. So far it's cost about six hundred dollars."

Marjorie Harris, the actress playing the cop/hooker, wore mid-thigh boots, mesh stockings, a micro-miniskirt, a fuzzy white jacket, and a well-exposed white bra that revealed maximum cleavage. On a remote monitor Lerner watched a rehearsal and, as she lurched backward after being shot, observed, "You don't see her tits and it's no good." The evidence was plain that Marjorie Harris was an accomplished professional. Standing next to the script supervisor, I could see that the written dialogue called for her to holler "Freeze!" She'd improvised, however, so that what came out was "Damn it! I said 'Freeze!' " She fired a shot, but before she could get off another round her gun jammed and she said "Shit!" Then, as often happens in the movies, she absorbed a deadly load of lead with her bounteous chest.

An assistant director announced, "All right, everyone. Let's do it."

On the first take, everything was going well until, at an inopportune moment, Russ Markowitz's cellular phone rang. Bret Michaels, who wore jeans, a leather jacket, a red bandanna, and a tortured straw cowboy hat, had a lighthearted meltdown. "My God!" he said. "This is the best shot I've ever set up in history, and the cell phone goes off."

Finally, he got the take he wanted. This left seven more scenes on the schedule, but Lerner and I had a plane to catch. En route to the airport, he marvelled, in a less than sanguine manner, at the glacial pace of the director of photography. By 9 P.M. Lerner would be back in Los Angeles, with plans to spend a couple more hours working. He would call his mother, in Israel, whom he speaks with almost every day. The weekend was nigh—for Lerner, typically a busman's holiday. At any given moment, he has seen virtually the entire list of *Variety's* top fifty grossers, often digesting three movies in a row at the neighborhood multiplex. "I like to go and pay my eight dollars and watch the people, how they react," he said. "I learn a lot from that. I buy my popcorn. I buy my soda and my ice cream. And I watch." ♦

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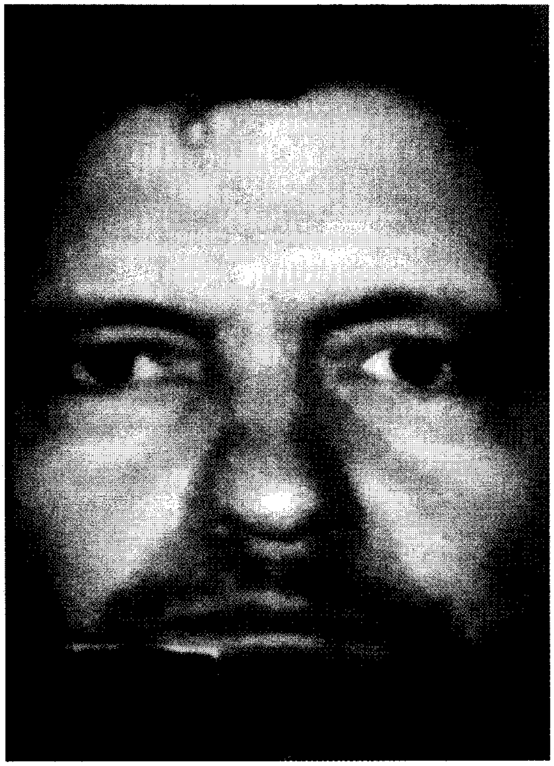
A REPORTER AT LARGE

DEFENDING THE UNABOMBER

A new look into the case—and how Theodore Kaczynski failed to get his day in court—raises questions about sanity and justice.

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN



THE ending—abrupt, unsatisfying, badly understood—befitted the strange, unhappy saga of Theodore J. Kaczynski. He was spared a gruelling trial, the judgment of an elaborately chosen, "death qualified" jury, and a strong chance of being condemned to death, but he was saved from all this by a bizarre alliance of lawyers he was trying to fire, a family he had renounced, psychiatrists he did not trust or respect (and in some cases had never met), a federal judge who had drastically restricted his right to counsel and seemed to fear (with reason) the trial to come, a press convinced that he was a paranoid schizophrenic, and, finally, a legendary death-penalty opponent skilled at "client management" (management, that is, of Kaczynski). Much of the story took place entirely out of public view. Kaczynski pleaded guilty, in late January, to all charges, and forswore all appeals, in exchange for a life sentence. In our overburdened courts, defendants are often left with little choice but to plead guilty, forfeiting their right to a trial in exchange for a lesser sentence. But Ted Kaczynski was not just another defendant denied his day in court.

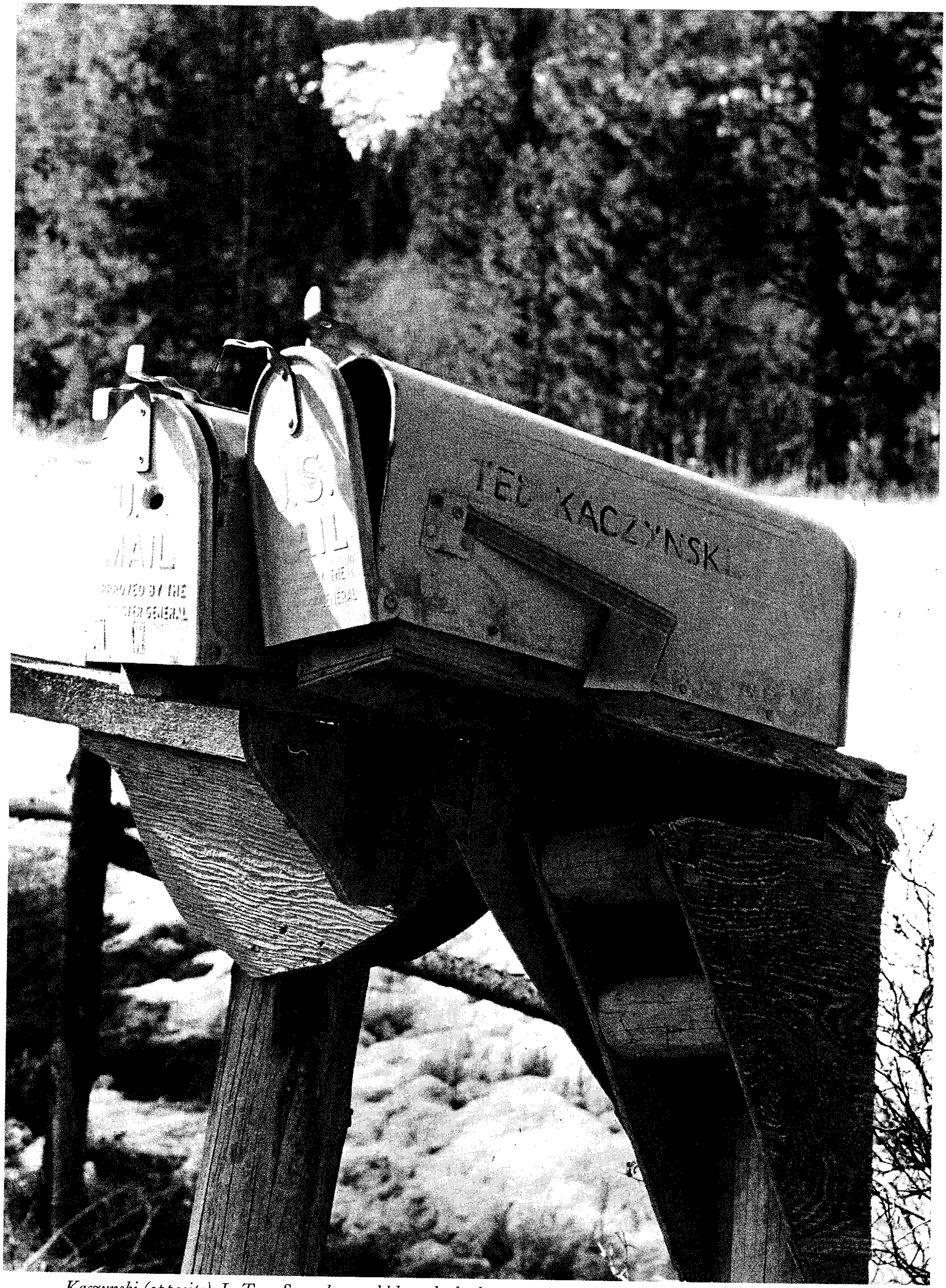
He was, of course, the Unabomber, the self-styled scourge of big business, big science, behavioralism, genetics, computer science, and all things high-tech and harmful to the environment. For seventeen years, starting in 1978, he had terrorized the country, killing three people and injuring twenty-three—all with small, handmade parcel bombs. The longest, most expensive manhunt in American history had produced no real suspects. Then, in 1993, the bomber wrote to the New York *Times*, identifying himself as a member of an anarchist group called the Freedom Club, and in 1995, in the most extraordinary manuscript submission in the history of publishing, he prevailed upon the Washington *Post* and the *Times* to publish a thirty-five-thousand-word essay, "Industrial Society and Its Future," by promising to stop the killings.

The Manifesto, as it became known, denounced modern technology and urged a revolution in the name of Wild Nature. Jefferson Morley, an editor at the *Post*, described it as "a romantic, turgid, disturbing document—but so were the 'Port Huron Statement' (which marked the birth of the New Left in 1962) and 'Witness,' Whittaker Chambers's autobiography in 1952 (which marked the birth of the modern Right)." Most Americans didn't read it, and no doubt considered its author nothing more than an evil coward.

David Kaczynski, a social worker in Schenectady, New York, read the Manifesto on the Internet, and thought he recognized his older brother's language and ideas. After considerable agonizing, David got in touch with the F.B.I., and Ted, then fifty-three, was arrested on April 3, 1996, at his cabin, near Lincoln, Montana. The Freedom Club turned out to have a membership of one.

Nineteen months later, jury selection began in Sacramento, California, for a federal trial on charges related to four bombings, two of them fatal. The prosecution, over bitter objections by David Kaczynski, had decided to seek the death penalty. Because the F.B.I. had found an overwhelming trove of evidence in Kaczynski's cabin—it included a completed bomb, a carbon copy of the Manifesto, and thousands of pages of journals meticulously recording his work on the earlier bombs—the guilt phase of the trial was effectively moot, and the lawyers were already looking to the penalty phase, when jurors would be asked to consider a death sentence. For six weeks, Kaczynski watched with great interest as his lawyers grilled the prospective jurors. Here were the ordinary, technology-oppressed Americans in whose name he had conducted his long campaign of terror against "the technician class." Kaczynski, dressed in cable-knit sweaters and striped dress shirts, looked trim and professorial, and nothing like the shaggy, half-mad hermit whose image was flashed around the world after his arrest. He conferred amiably with his attorneys—Quin Denvir, the federal defender for the Eastern District of California, and Judy Clarke, a renowned trial lawyer and federal defender. Clarke had recently saved Susan Smith—the woman who drowned her two young

GLOBE PHOTOS; (OPPOSITE) RICK WILKING/REUTERS/ARCHIVE PHOTOS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TED KACZYNSKI

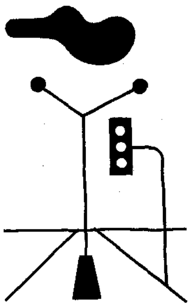
Kaczynski (opposite): In Tony Serra he would have had a lawyer ready to help him make a deeply subversive case.

sons in South Carolina—from execution. Lanky and attractive, Clarke often had her hand on Ted's shoulder.

But the appearance of harmony at the defense table was misleading. In truth, a profound conflict had been growing between Kaczynski and his various lawyers virtually since his arrest. They believed that his best, if not his only, hope of escaping a death sentence was to claim that he was mentally ill. He staunchly refused to do so. This clash of wills and world views eventually erupted into open court. But before he was yanked offstage Kaczynski's quietly fierce performance raised fundamental questions about a defendant's right to participate in his own defense, the role of psychiatry in the courts, and the pathologizing of radical dissent in both the courts and the press.

HE was a bookish, brilliant boy, born in 1942, the first child of ambitious, self-educated parents. Reared in a working-class Chicago suburb, he skipped two grades, had few friends, liked to shut himself up in his attic room. He was a nerd's nerd, shy and arrogant, socially doomed. For playmates he was forced to rely on David, who was seven years younger, popular, and easygoing.

At sixteen, Ted entered Harvard on a scholarship. He lived in Eliot House, where big, swaggering rich boys ruled the roost. Ted, physically slight and badly dressed, ate alone. He graduated at twenty, then went to the University of Michigan, at Ann Arbor, where his considerable gifts as a mathematician emerged. He began to publish in scholarly journals, and his dissertation, on "boundary functions," won a prize.



Still, after he left for a teaching job at Berkeley, almost nobody in Michigan remembered him. Ann Arbor and Berkeley were hotbeds of the student antiwar movement, which was then reaching its peak. Kaczynski apparently remained uninvolved. In a 1968 photograph taken at Berkeley, he's short-haired and clean-shaven, and is wearing a coat and tie. Though not a popular teacher, he continued to publish impressively and was on track for tenure in one of the world's top math departments. Then, in 1969, he suddenly resigned, telling his family that he didn't want to teach math to engineers who would use it to harm the environment.

It seemed that, for all his indifference to student leftism, Kaczynski despised the status quo. He and David, who graduated from Columbia in 1970, bought 1.4 acres together in Montana, in high country just west of the Continental Divide. And that was where Ted lived—except for a few forays into the outside world to earn money at menial jobs and, later, to deliver bombs—for the next twenty-five years. He built a simple, ten-foot-by-twelve-foot cabin with two small windows, a woodstove, no electricity, no plumbing. He grew a garden, built a root cellar, hunted rabbits and deer, exchanged vegetables with neighbors, didn't file a federal tax return. He rode an old bicycle five miles into the town of Lincoln for supplies, and spent a lot of time at the public library there. His parents visited him each summer for the first few years. David came several times, and then, emulating Ted, moved to his own patch of remote wilderness, in the west Texas desert. But Ted's relations with his family became increasingly strained. In voluminous letters, he blamed them—particularly his mother, Wanda—for his shyness, his loneliness, his anxiety, his anger, even his height (he was shorter than David). Their visits ceased. He sometimes refused to open their letters. The family came to believe that Ted was seriously disturbed.

THERE was never any real doubt that Kaczynski was legally sane. But his lawyers believed that the degree of his culpability for his crimes could be made to depend on his psychiatric classification—the more serious his diagnosis, the less his culpability.

They called him a "high-functioning" paranoid schizophrenic. Medically speaking, that would place him at the least-ill end of the spectrum of schizophrenia, where obvious symptoms are often absent. The primary evidence of his illness seemed to be in his writings (most of which have never been made public), in his family's stories, and in his way of life. Dr. Karen Froming, who specializes in neuropsychological assessment, gave Kaczynski a battery of tests that "revealed deficits of a mild nature in the areas of frontal and cerebellar motor functions, microsomia or smell functions, cognitive processing efficiency, visual memory, and affective processing." These deficits were consonant, she said, with paranoid schizophrenia. They did not, however, prove it. What really indicated such a diagnosis to her, Dr. Froming told me, were Kaczynski's systematized paranoid delusions.

I asked what those delusions were.

"Anti-technology," Dr. Froming said simply. "His view of technology as the vehicle by which people are destroying themselves and the world." The Manifesto, in other words.

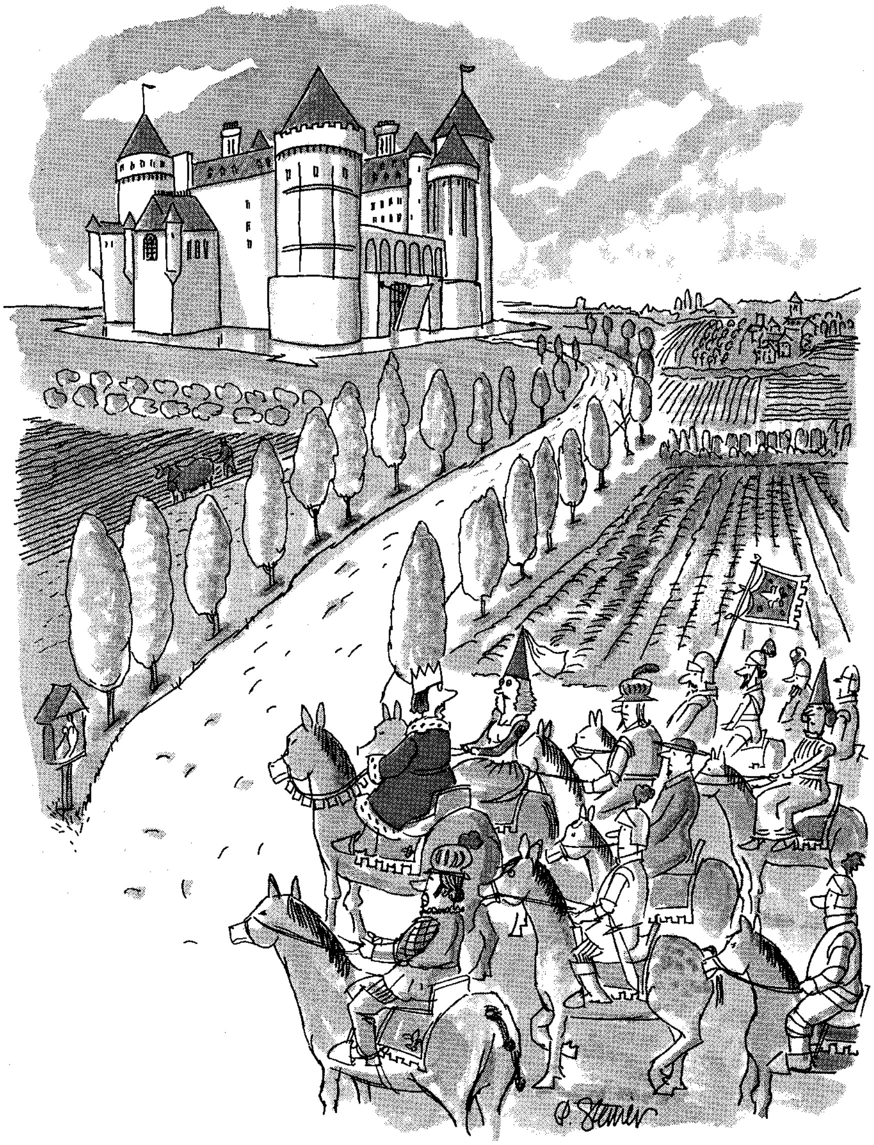
Predictably, the prosecution's psychiatrists disagreed. Dr. Froming's test findings "scream geek, not schizophrenic," Dr. Park Dietz said dryly. Dr. Dietz, a forensic psychiatrist who often works for the government in high-profile cases, cautioned me that he could not diagnose Kaczynski's condition without interviewing him, and that he had been prevented from doing so, despite a court order. (According to the defense team, the problem was that Kaczynski refused to see a government doctor, whereas the government thought that the real problem lay with Kaczynski's lawyers, who did not want him interviewed by experts who might find him not psychotic.) Dr. Dietz had, however, read Kaczynski's journals, and had not found them to show schizophrenia. "They're full of strong emotions, considerable anger, and an elaborate, closely reasoned system of belief about the adverse impact of technology on society. The question always is: Is that belief system philosophy or is it delusion? The answer has more to do with the ideology of the psychiatrist than with anything else."

Kaczynski's own ideology gave psychiatrists short shrift. "The concept of 'mental health' in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the [industrial-technological] system and does so without showing signs of stress," he wrote in the Manifesto. He himself, despite his elaborate effort to withdraw from society, showed plenty of signs of stress—insomnia, anxiety, and depression—and even sought help from therapists in Helena, Great Falls, and Missoula. In his journals he recorded his fear that his campaign against industrial society would ultimately be dismissed as the work of a "sickie," observing that "many tame, conformist types seem to have a powerful *need* to depict the enemy of society as sordid, repulsive, or 'sick.'" He noted the old Soviet practice of suppressing dissidents by labelling them mentally ill.

So the paradox, as his case neared trial, could not have been lost on Kaczynski. His own lawyers, talented idealists intent on saving his life, were striving mightily to label him mentally ill. The prosecutors, meanwhile, intent on having him executed, were ready to accept him as the dead-serious dissident and violent anarchist that his writings said he was. "The prosecution believes he was acting on a genuine political program," Dr. Froming said, with some wonderment. "In fact, he wasn't. What it was was a real need to protect himself from an extremely frightening world." Dr. Xavier Amador, a schizophrenia researcher at Columbia University, who did not examine Kaczynski but, at the request of the defense team, did review his writings and submit a report to the court, specializes in "unawareness of illness." The circularity of the reasoning in Dr. Amador's report, in which Kaczynski's disdain for psychiatrists and his firm rejection of the idea that he was schizophrenic were offered as expert evidence that he was schizophrenic, presumably made for some exquisitely annoying reading for Kaczynski in his cell.

Dr. Froming's report was probably not much more fun. She wrote that his journals undermined his claim, made during their interview, that he had chosen to live as a hermit: "The explanations for his chronic social isolation which he offered during the testing were clearly contradicted by Mr. Kaczynski's writings that document his despair over both his inability to establish normal human relationships and his inability to comprehend why he has been unable to do so." It was as if being proudly independent ("autonomy" is much extolled in the Manifesto) were incompatible with being sad, lonely, and shy—almost, indeed, as if sadness and loneliness were the equivalent of mental illness.

The psychiatrists retained by Kaczynski's lawyers stood ready to treat his crimes as symptoms (the illness committed them, not Kaczynski, Dr. Amador explained to me), which was really the legal and ethical heart of the matter.



"We can conquer somebody with a bigger castle, or we can add on."

• •

To a lay observer, there was, in truth, a mountain of evidence, lying mostly in plain sight, of complete madness. The defendant had apparently—and, indeed, would soon admit he had—spent seventeen years building ingenious little bombs and sending them around the country to kill and maim people he had never met. Mild deficits in affective processing seemed, somehow, beside the point. And yet the bombings were the crimes charged. They could not be the evidence of illness.

While this might seem a perverse distinction before the law, its real implications are more disturbing still, for it suggests what few of us like to acknowledge—that sane, rational people may commit violent, terrible acts, including serial murder. (Dr. Dietz, who seems almost to relish this thought, helped convince a jury that Jeffrey Dahmer, the Wisconsin cannibal, was not insane.) Ted Kaczynski, in his refusal to plead mental illness, was not only refusing to recant his ideas but also refusing to recant his acts. He had done what he had done for the reasons he had given. And he was apparently prepared to explain those reasons to the jury and the world. He even had, virtually from the beginning, a lawyer who was ready and well qualified to step in and help him make his deeply subversive case.

J. Tony Serra had got in touch with Kaczynski shortly after his arrest. Serra was the real-life inspiration for a 1989 film, "True Believer," starring James Woods, about a flamboyant radi-

"A Mr. Fermly to walk you."

• •

cal attorney who defends unpopular clients. Known for courtroom eloquence, a long gray ponytail, Salvation Army suits, and a marijuana habit, Serra has built an enviable record of legal victories, often in cases that other lawyers wouldn't touch. He has represented Black Panthers, White Panthers, members of the Symbionese Liberation Army. He has twice won freedom for men already condemned to death in California. He works pro bono much of the time, and that was what he proposed to do for Kaczynski. He has, he says, the highest regard for public defenders, who, like him, spend their careers representing the poor and the despised. "I respect them and I love them," he told me. "They are my allies." But Kaczynski's lawyers were intent on saving his life with a defense that their client did not want. "I am of a different ilk," Serra told me. "I have always served the objective of the client. A person has the right to defend himself in the manner he chooses, even if it means death, as long as he appreciates the risk. Kaczynski appreciated and understood all the ramifications and wanted a trial based on an ideological defense."

As Serra envisioned such a defense—which could probably be argued only during the penalty phase of the trial—Kaczynski would explain himself to the jury, using the Manifesto. Eminent political scientists would be called to interpret the essay, paragraph by paragraph. The defense case would be based on what Serra called "imperfect necessity—you commit a crime to avert a greater disaster that you believe will occur," though others may find your belief unreasonable. "It doesn't eliminate culpability," Serra noted, "but it lowers culpability." Serra was confident that Kaczynski's case against technology would be perfectly comprehensible to the jurors. "It's not crazy, and it's not difficult to understand. And if the hole in the ozone opens and kills us all, he'll be proved right!"

While federal death-penalty guidelines do not include ideology in the list of "mitigating factors," they do contain an "other factors" clause, and Serra thought he had a reasonable chance of persuading at least a couple of jurors to vote against execution. (Denvir and Clarke were counting on "impaired capacity"—a mitigator when "the defendant's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the defendant's conduct or to conform conduct to the requirements of the law was significantly impaired." Any defense would have to contend, of course, with various countervailing "aggravating factors," including "substantial planning and premeditation" and "grave risk of death to additional persons.") Serra, who has represented his share of disturbed clients, did not consider Kaczynski mad. Indeed, he told a reporter, "This guy is a genius. He sees things we can't see and understands things we can't understand. Maybe we should give him the benefit of the doubt."

Kaczynski's court-appointed legal team took a very tough stand against Tony Serra. Serra has declined to describe their contacts in any detail, beyond acknowledging that the statement "His blood will be on your hands" was liberally employed. Scharlette Holdman, a veteran death-penalty "mitigation investigator" and a key member of the defense team, was less shy. "I couldn't believe that Tony was coming to a capital case and exploiting the vulnerability of a mentally ill patient in that emotionally charged environment," she told me. Holdman, who is not a lawyer, has earned a formidable reputation by managing appeals in scores of capital cases in Florida. *Newsweek* once dubbed her "The Mistress of Delay" for her success in preventing executions. Now working from San Francisco, she is usually appointed to cases on a confidential basis, and prosecutors often know little or nothing about her role. Though the fact that she was working with the Kaczynski team went completely unreported, she was involved almost from the beginning. And the Serra matter really seemed to enrage her. "There are always those attorneys, like moths to a light, who come to a famous case out of their own self-interest, nothing to do with the defendant's interest," Holdman told me. She knows well that the best chance of saving the life of a convicted capital defendant usually lies in constructing a sympathetic life story, often one involving significant mental impairment, and that such a story must often be prepared without the client's coöperation. I first tracked her down, in fact, at a conference of the capital-defense bar where the workshops included "Dealing with Difficult Clients" and "Detecting Mental Illness." Holdman was offering "Defusing Bombs Before Penalty Phase" (pun most likely intended).

Holdman had been described to me by a former colleague as a specialist in "client management," and she spent many hours a week with Kaczynski during the long months of trial preparation. She was one of the links between Kaczynski and the outside world, which included his political supporters—an amorphous but vivid crew of anarchists and enviroradicals, who gathered primarily on the Internet. Holdman even persuaded key figures in that world to shut down their support campaigns as the trial approached, lest they disrupt delicate plea negotiations. Holdman's counsels to Kaczynski himself have not been disclosed, but he was obviously kept firmly in the dark for as long as possible about the extent of his team's plans to depict him at trial as mentally ill. The analogy usually employed by hard-liners in this area is that the brain surgeon doesn't ask the brain-damaged patient how he wants his surgery done.

For many months, Kaczynski's attention was actually focussed elsewhere—on the possibility that a defense motion to suppress the evidence found in his cabin, because of inadequacies in the F.B.I.'s search warrant, might succeed, and that the case against him might therefore collapse. Even after this motion was denied, he apparently held out hope that an appeal might succeed, and that he might yet walk free, back to Montana. Although Tony Serra says he believes that Kaczynski did everything he could to engage his services long before the trial but was prevented from doing so by his defense team, it seems more likely that Kaczynski was not yet convinced that it would be necessary for him to dismiss his lawyers. If he did, in fact, believe that he had any chance of walking free from jail, he was, of course, severely deluded (not clinically deluded but blinded by unrealistic hopes, however conceived and encouraged). No judge in America would have set him free. Still, Kaczynski always attached, in negotiations with the government, a major condition to his offer of a guilty plea—that he be allowed to pursue his appeal on the search of his cabin. Not a prayer, said the prosecution.

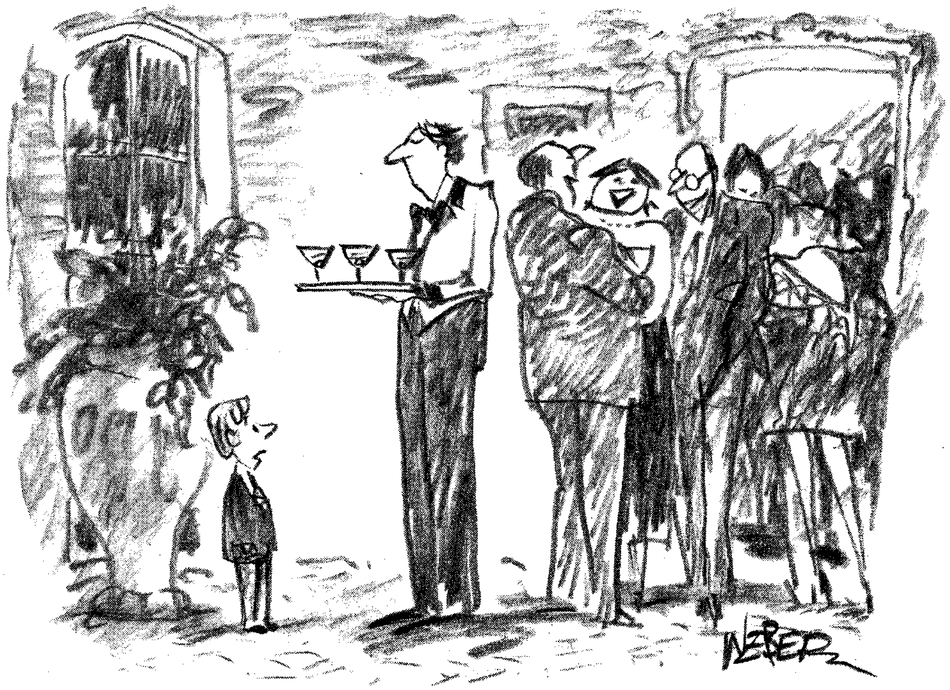
Kaczynski was evidently not seeing much of the press coverage of his case, where his lawyers' plan to offer a "mental defect" defense was being reported. Indeed, it was only in the second half of November, with jury selection well under way, that Kaczynski discovered that his lawyers were planning to introduce testimony from the psychiatrists who had diagnosed his condition as paranoid schizophrenic. He was furious, and protested vehemently. And that was when, with the trial itself rapidly approaching, a game of legal chicken began. In Scharlette Holdman's experience, it was the client who normally flinched in these situations. This client did not flinch.

David and Wanda Kaczynski were in a horrendous position. David had always loved his brainy older brother, the proud purist, though the two of them had had some painful clashes. Ted once worked briefly in a factory where David served as his supervisor. Ted had gone on a date with a female co-worker, and when she told him she didn't want to see him anymore he posted copies of a nasty limerick about her in various places in the factory. After David told him to cut it out, Ted stuck a copy on the machine where David worked, daring him to do something about it. David fired him.

David made his last visit to Montana in 1986. He and Ted continued to write, but their letters grew increasingly rancorous, particularly when the subject was Ted's mental health. David and his wife even discussed what might be necessary to have Ted involuntarily committed. In November of 1995, in the last letter David received, Ted wrote, "I am not 'suffering, sick or discouraged,' and I don't know what 'indications' you think you have that I am so. But if you want me to get sick, all you have to do is keep trying to communicate with me, because I get just choked with frustration at my inability to get our stinking family off my back once and for all, and 'stinking family' emphatically includes you."

David shared this letter, and others like it, with the Washington *Post* last year as part of what the *Post* called "a campaign by the Kaczynski family to persuade prosecutors not to seek the death penalty." The idea of the campaign was, of course, to portray Ted as mentally ill. After making the excruciating decision to turn in his brother to the F.B.I., David had felt betrayed when the authorities, breaking a promise, revealed his role to the press, thereby causing him, his wife, and his mother to be cruelly besieged by reporters, and also causing what might be a permanent rift with Ted. But that betrayal was small beer compared with the government's subsequent decision to seek the death penalty.

David and Wanda stayed impressively "on message" even then, according to a key member of the defense team. With the help of Anthony Bisceglie, a media-savvy Washington lawyer, they had learned how to use the press. In the months after Ted's arrest, they gave long interviews to the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post*. David talked at length to the Sacra-



"No, thank you. One Martini and I'm out like a light."

mento *Bee*, painting a vivid picture of his brother as a complex idealist who was helplessly mentally ill. In September, 1996, mother and son went on "60 Minutes," and Wanda, who was well spoken and sympathetic, and was nearing eighty, told a horrifying story. At the age of nine months, she said, Ted had been hospitalized for a severe case of hives. In those days, babies in that hospital were not allowed to be touched by family members. Ted was strapped to a table, naked and screaming, for a week. When she finally got him back, Wanda said, he was unresponsive, "completely limp." And she felt that all his later problems had stemmed from that early trauma.

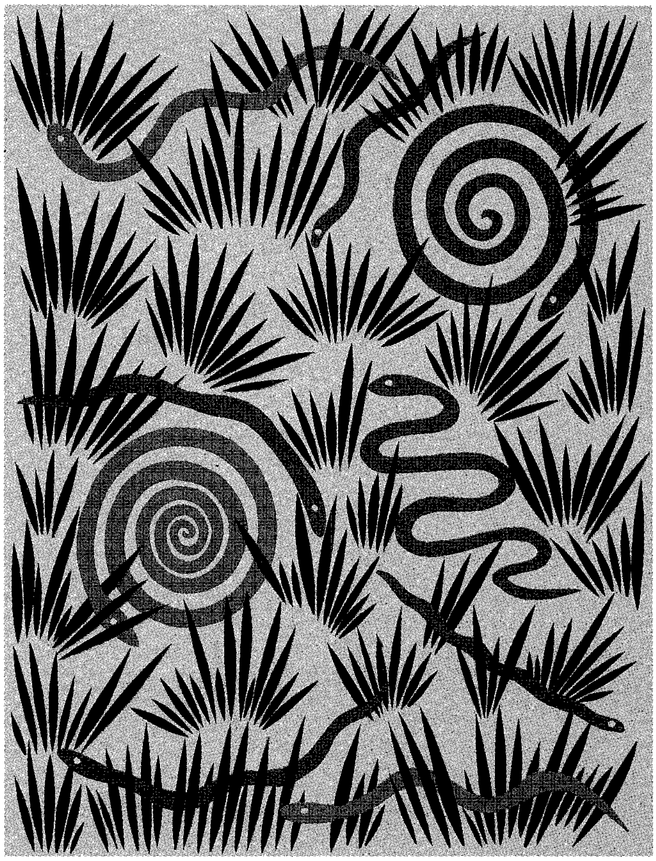
David and Wanda worked with Ted's lawyers, meeting with the mental-health experts and with a family historian, for the defense planned to describe a family dynamic that included, according to court transcripts, "multiple generational . . . mental illnesses." How much Ted knew of this collaboration is hard to gauge. David did hear that Ted had seen the *Times* interview and a transcript of their "60 Minutes" appearance, and that he was livid about alleged inaccuracies as well as the general violation of his privacy.

On January 5th, the day Ted's trial was scheduled to start, Wanda and David bravely turned up in the federal courtroom in Sacramento, taking seats in the front row which the defense had reserved for them. Ted had seen neither of them in more than a decade. But when he came in, a few minutes later, striding briskly across the room to his spot at the defense table, not five yards from where his mother and brother were sitting, he turned and sat down without a flicker of acknowledgment.

THE courtroom was jammed that morning, with reporters, spectators, surviving victims of the Unabomber, and victims' families. Judge Garland E. Burrell, Jr., took his seat on the bench, but before he could say a word Kaczynski himself spoke up, in a calm, reedy voice. "Your Honor, before these proceedings begin, I would like to revisit the issue of my relations with my attorneys," he said. "It's very important." Apparently, Kaczynski, after weeks of semipublic wrangling with his lawyers about a mental-health defense, had just learned that they were planning to go

ARTIST'S EASEL BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

JUNGLE BOOK

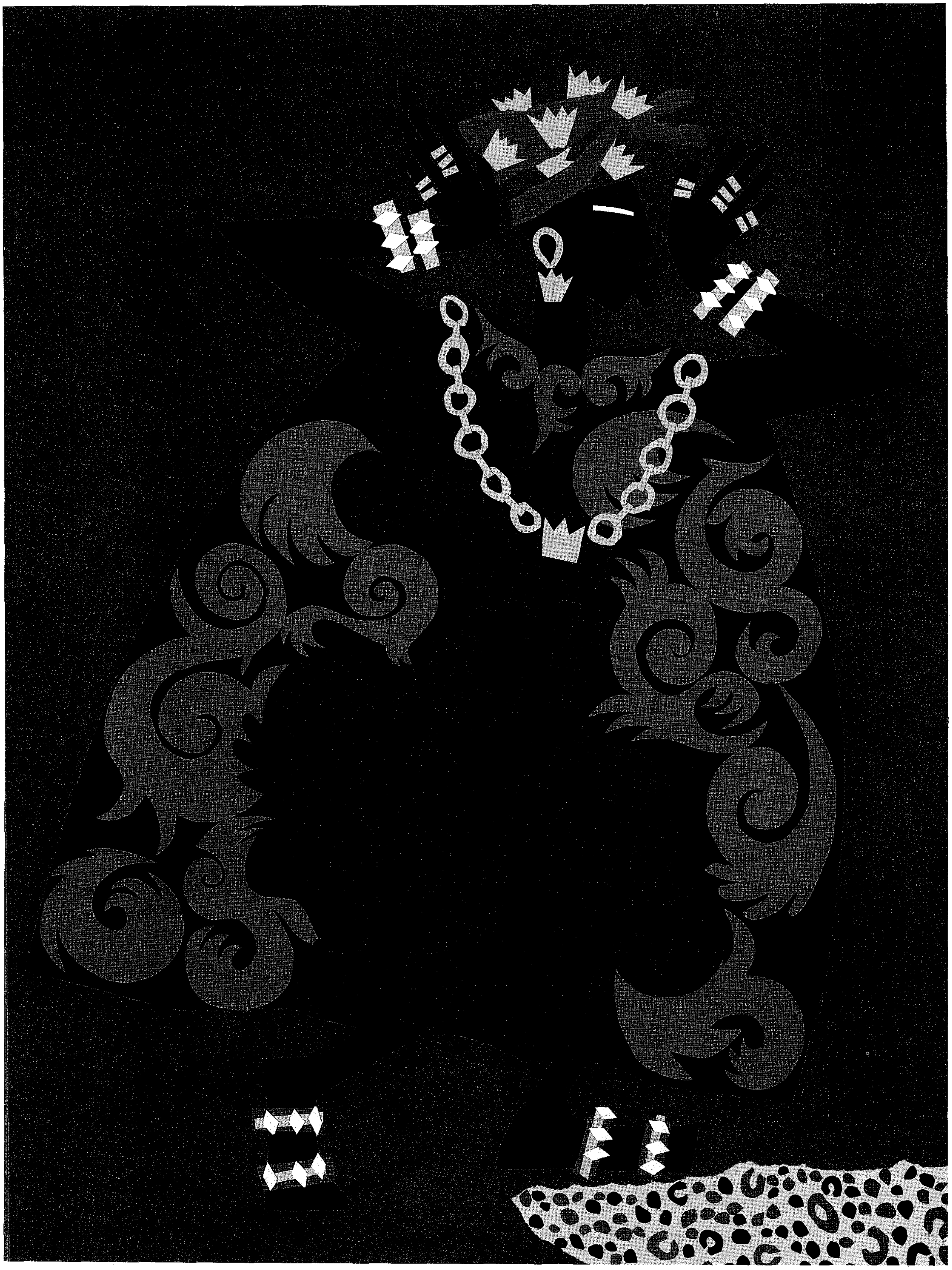


CALLAWAY/HYPERION

MICHAEL ROBERTS'S vivid new picture book, "The Jungle ABC," is, according to the artist, drawn from an Africa of the imagination. "I have been once to Kenya," Roberts, who is director of fashion visuals for this magazine, says. "I was sent by British *Vogue* to do photographs of the film set of 'White Mischief.' It was horrible, going all that way to a prefabricated Africa in real Africa. It was too strange. I saw no jungle life whatsoever. I saw Geraldine Chaplin in a thirties gown."

If the book's construction-paper cutouts of bounding impalas, leaping tribesmen, and quizzical monkeys—one image for each letter of the alphabet—are inspired by any real-life location, it is Paris, where Roberts has lived since 1990. "I am surrounded by primitive-art shops—this is where Picasso bought those masks," he says. And, come to think of it, his illustration of a gleeful woman banging on a bone xylophone has more than a hint of Josephine Baker about it. "The Jungle ABC" conjures Africa through a sophisticated primitivism: a page of orchids looks like the print on a fabulous African head wrap, but it also evokes the late cutouts of Matisse.

Roberts, who has done stints as art or fashion director at a raft of international magazines, is also a photographer, a sometime music-video director, and a T-shirt designer. He started playing around with the jungle-book idea in the nineteen-eighties, when he was the style director of *Vanity Fair*, but he put it away until a couple of years ago. He hopes that "The Jungle ABC" will appeal to both children and adults: "When I saw the book laid out, I thought, This is the kind of book that parents would *like* their children to like, because they like it themselves, but in fact a lot of children like something really vile and nasty." Roberts promises that his next book "is going to be *extremely* vile and nasty." —REBECCA MEAD



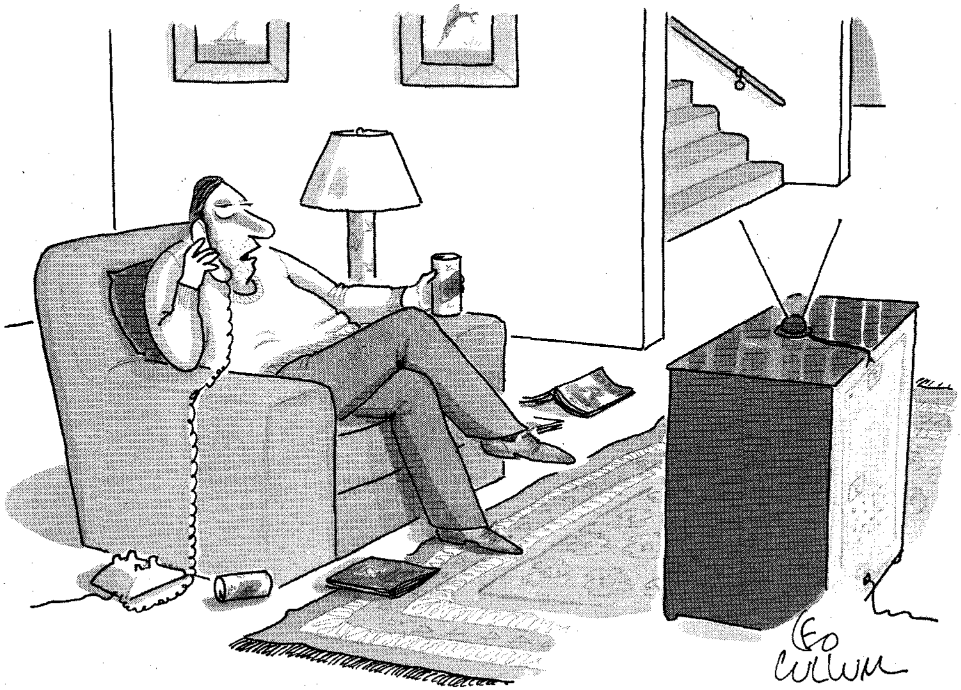
ahead with it in the guilt phase, despite his wishes. For her opening statement, Judy Clarke had brought along two photographs of her client—one the scrubbed young Berkeley professor and the other a spectral hermit's face. Kaczynski and his lawyers retired with the judge to his chambers, and there Kaczynski declared his interest in replacing his lawyers with Tony Serra.

Proceedings were delayed for two days while Burrell attempted to resolve the conflict. Contact was made with Serra, and his willingness to represent Kaczynski pro bono was confirmed. During the subsequent public hearing, Kaczynski again spoke up, clearly and politely stating his wish to retain Serra. Judge Burrell, who was said to be haunted by the thought of poor Lance Ito, undone in the national spotlight by bunglers and demagogues, denied the request for new counsel. Serra would need many months to prepare, he said. The jury had already been selected, and witnesses were waiting to testify. The request was "untimely." Glaring at Kaczynski, Burrell went on to try to settle, once and for all, the dispute between the defendant and his lawyers by ruling that it was the lawyers' choice, rather than the defendant's, whether or not to present a "mental status" defense. This ruling caught all parties by surprise, and the next morning the prosecution expressed its concern that the ruling might contain "grave appellate error" and cause a guilty verdict to be thrown out by a higher court. The Judge also seemed to have second thoughts about his ruling.

Kaczynski, in any event, had just electrified the courtroom with another announcement—made this time through an ashen Judy Clarke—that, since he had been denied both the counsel of his choice and the control of his own defense, he would exercise his Sixth Amendment right to represent himself. Clarke explained that Kaczynski, while he had no enthusiasm for doing so, felt he had no other choice. It was the "unendurability" of listening to his lawyers describe him in public as mentally ill that had forced this decision, she said—an inability to endure which she considered a symptom of his mental illness. (Would a sane man, passionately committed to his ideas, more easily listen to himself being described by his own representatives as insane?) On the day that Kaczynski made this request, David Kaczynski told me later, "I thought he had to be absolutely the most lonely person in the world. I thought, Here he is rejecting lawyers who care about him just as he rejected the family who loved him. I felt intense grief."

The Judge deferred the question of self-representation by ordering a competency examination. A Bureau of Prisons psychiatrist, Dr. Sally Johnson, would determine whether Kaczynski was competent to stand trial and competent to represent himself. Since the standard in such matters is low, there was little doubt that Kaczynski would be found competent. Indeed, Judge Burrell himself, who had been dealing with Kaczynski through seventeen months of pretrial hearings and motions, had said of him a few days before, during an in-camera discussion, "I find him to be lucid, calm. He presents himself in an intelligent manner. In my opinion, he has a keen understanding of the issues. He has always seemed focussed on the issues in his contact with me. His mannerisms and his eye contact have been appropriate. I know there's a conflict in the medical evidence as to whether his conduct, at least in the past, has been controlled by any or some mental ailment, but I've seen nothing during my contact with him that appears to be a manifestation of any such ailment. If anything is present, I cannot detect it."

THE news media could detect it, though. As Kaczynski's conflict with his lawyers escalated, delaying the start of the trial, a cartoon image of Ted as a wild-eyed madman gained currency among reporters, pundits, and TV talk-show hosts. Kaczynski became the stuff of kitsch. Even the *Times* ran a story, in early January, that began, "Theodore J. Kaczynski, the hermit standing trial on charges that he is the Unabomber, has told his defense team that he believes satellites control people and place electrodes in their brains. He himself is controlled by an omnipotent organization which he is powerless to resist, he told the lawyers." These lines were a collage of fragments from various sources pasted together to produce remarks that were never made and, if they had been, would almost certainly have been shielded by attorney-client privilege. *Newsweek*, in a January cover story about new research on genes and the brain, wrote, "Mental health, in this new view, is a continuum. At one extreme might be a Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber suspect described by his brother's lawyers as obsessive-



"Oh, I'm really sorry. I just placed three million with some broker who called five minutes ago."

compulsive, out of touch with reality, delusional, antisocial and paranoid."

"Described by his brother's lawyers"?

Mental health *is* a continuum. There are many shades of schizophrenia, for instance, and Kaczynski may suffer from some version of the disease. But he is nowhere near any clinical extreme. There is no credible evidence that he hears voices, has hallucinations, or is "out of touch with reality"—unless reality is defined as having conventional social and political views. There was clearly something comforting, though, in the familiar picture of an ordinary crackpot—and something frightening about the physically meek, homegrown terrorist who stubbornly refused to accept not just established authority but modernity itself. Fears that the trial might become a "circus" filled countless editorials. (This awful possibility was also referred to as a political "show trial," though that term properly refers, of course, to a sham trial staged by a state to punish its enemies, and not to an argument offered by a revolutionary in the dock.) It wasn't easy to picture Kaczynski turning his trial into agitprop theatre—he is no Abbie Hoffman—but it was becoming clear that he simply would not recant his stark, apocalyptic view that science and progress were a colossal mistake.

There were a few—a very few—dissenting voices. Michael Mello, a law professor (and former capital defender), wrote, in a column for the Sacramento *Bee*, "Ted Kaczynski's lawyers, however well-intentioned and paternalistic, are not 'assisting' him. They are controlling him. They are strong-arming a man on trial for his life." Mello compared Kaczynski's legal situation to that of John Brown, the leader of the famous raid at Harpers Ferry—a violent attempt to foment a slave rebellion in Virginia in 1859. Brown's refusal to allow his lawyers to raise an insanity defense during his trial was respected, and his execution helped bring about the end of slavery. James Q. Wilson, the conservative social scientist, wrote, in a *Times* Op-Ed, of the Manifesto, "The argument is subtle and carefully developed, lacking anything even faintly resembling the wild claims or irrational speculation that a lunatic might produce.... If it is the work of a madman, then the writings of many political philosophers—Jean Jacques Rousseau, Tom Paine, Karl Marx—are scarcely more sane."

The only writer who got to see Kaczynski was John Zerzan, a veteran anarchist from Oregon. Here is a sample of the coverage that Zerzan was giving Kaczynski, taken from the magazine *Anarchy*:

> Enter the Unabomber and a new line is being drawn. This time the bohemian schizfluxers, Green yuppies, hobbyist anarcho-journalists, condescending organizers of the poor, hip nihilo-aesthetes, and all the other "anarchists" who thought their pretentious pastimes would go unchallenged indefinitely—well, it's time to pick which side you're on....
>
> Some, no doubt, would prefer to wait for a perfect victim. Many would like to unlearn what they know of the invasive and unchallenged violence generated everywhere by the prevailing order—in order to condemn the Unabomber's counter-terror.
>
> But here is the man and the challenge before us.
>
> Anarchists! One more effort if you would be enemies of this long nightmare!
>
> Think for yourself. Act on your own.

Those who wanted to know what Kaczynski was thinking were forced to rely on the few people who had contact with him—still, primarily, his lawyers, who naturally tended to emphasize his terrible mental illness. (It was so much worse than an outsider could know, they claimed. Anyone who doubted its power was stupid or heartless, or both.) But Tony Serra, too, was still in touch with him, and what he told me was that Kaczynski "believed that the public defenders (who are paid by the government and therefore 'sup from the same trough' as the prosecutors) were conspiring... to silence him and prevent him from espousing the ideology that 'explained' the homicides. He believed that it was ultimately the right and the left hands, so to speak, of government seeking the same objective in chilling his opportunity to be heard."

DR. SALLY JOHNSON proved to be the drama's deus ex machina. A lifelong employee of the federal prison system, she is currently the associate warden for health services at a prison in Butner, North Carolina. Like Dr. Park Dietz, she has testified for the prosecution in many high-profile trials, including Jim Bakker's and John Hinckley's. She has a reputation for fairness, although Vince Fuller, one of Hinckley's attorneys, has said that the government "picks her when they want a certain result, and she gives it to them."

Dr. Johnson spent a week interviewing Kaczynski and reading his journals and other writings and the reports of the other doctors. As had been expected, she found Kaczynski competent to stand trial and to represent himself. But, according to those who read her sealed report to the court, she also offered a "provisional" diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. This was good news for Kaczynski's lawyers and bad news for the prosecutors, and it was to have a decisive impact on the proceedings.

Court reconvened on January 22nd. Although Dr. Johnson had found the defendant competent to represent himself, and both the defense and the prosecution, asked for their views, had filed briefs conceding that he had a constitutional right to do so, Judge Burrell went out on a judicial limb and denied Kaczynski's request. This request, too, he said, had been "untimely." Kaczynski would need time to prepare—never mind his offer to start trial immediately—and a new jury would have to be selected. The Judge even accused Kaczynski from the bench of trying to manipulate the court and delay his trial. The upshot: Kaczynski would have to proceed with his present lawyers, would have to listen to himself being described as mentally ill, and would have to listen to the most embarrassing passages in his journals read out in court, aware that they would be broadcast around the world as evidence that he was a "sickie," a despicable laughingstock, certainly not someone whose ideas should be taken seriously. That was when Kaczynski copped a plea.

It was a curious dénouement. The government had been widely criticized for not accepting previous offers of a guilty plea, and had been accused of pursuing the death penalty for political reasons. But the plea offers had always been conditional. The prosecutors wanted at least a clean win—a life sentence, without possibility of release—and not further litigation about the constitutionality of their search of the cabin. So they had refused to consider anything but an unconditional plea. And that was what Kaczynski suddenly offered them, only minutes after the Judge refused his request to represent himself.

In truth, the government's chances of getting a death sentence had started to look less bright. The prosecutors knew, after the Judge's rulings, that they would be facing at trial not only the formidable pair of Denvir and Clarke but the even more formidable pair of David and Wanda. The Kaczynskis, that is, had made it clear that they intended to sit, in obvious agony, behind Ted throughout the trial, and to testify about his many years of deepening mental illness. What jury would not be moved by such a spectacle?

Judge Burrell, for his part, had reason to be pleased with this abrupt conclusion. His painful struggle, primarily with Kaczynski, for control of his courtroom was suddenly over, and his controversial rulings restricting the defendant's right to counsel would not face appeal. Instead, they had helped to force the settlement of the case. There was, of course, something odd about his flying a psychiatrist in from North Carolina for a week to determine the defendant's competency to represent himself and then, when she found him competent, ruling that he could not represent himself. But the defense was not about to point out this bit of judicial fickleness. And, when the prosecutors suddenly changed course and supported this ruling, it seemed that the fix was definitely in. Nobody—at least, nobody with any power—wanted this trial to go ahead.

THE final scene, that afternoon, was appropriately weird. The Judge asked Kaczynski a set of basic questions—age, education, occupation—to which he gave answers that were both banal and riveting. "I was once an assistant professor of mathematics. Since then I have spent much time living in the woods in Montana and have held a variety of unskilled jobs." (At one point, the Judge used one of his favorite words, a miserable legalism, saying, "Is that what you are referencing?" Kaczynski replied, "Yes, Your Honor. That is what I am referring to." It was as if some lexical divinity had parted the clouds, particularly when the Judge then replied, "Are you referring to anything other than that?") Next, the prosecutors laid out some of the facts that they would be prepared to prove at trial. The recitation lasted nearly an hour. It was gory—shrapnel piercing a heart, hands blown off—and what was particularly horrifying were decoded "lab notes" from Kaczynski's journals, in which he recorded the results of his "experiments." "Excellent" was his judgment on the swift, bloody death of Hugh Scrutton, a young computer-rental-business owner. "A totally satisfactory result," he wrote of the murder of Thomas Mosser, a New Jersey father of two.

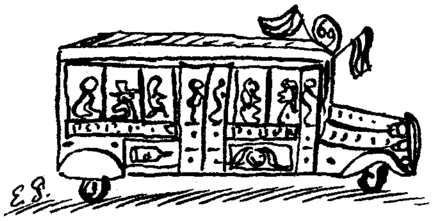
After each horror story—and all sixteen bombings were described—the Judge asked Kaczynski, "Do you agree with the factual representation just made by the Government's attorney?"

And Kaczynski answered, in a clear, unreadable tone, "Yes, Your Honor."

What was, in a way, the most disturbing story involved no fatalities. It was an attempt, in 1979, to bring down an airliner with seventy-two passengers aboard. Kaczynski had used a barometer-triggered device, and it had succeeded only in setting some mailbags on fire and forcing an emergency landing; in a letter written years later, the Unabomber expressed relief that the airline bomb had failed, since its target had been too indiscriminate. By then, he had laid out the political coördinates of his campaign, seeking to justify, in the Manifesto, his attacks on computer scientists, geneticists, behavioral psychologists, and public-relations executives. But one of his motives for planting a bomb on the airliner, and nearly killing all those people, had apparently been pure peevishness. Hypersensitive to noise, Kaczynski hated the jets that periodically flew over his home in Montana.

The worst journal entry, certainly, concerned the 1985 maiming of John Hauser, an Air Force pilot and Berkeley graduate student in electrical engineering:

> I was relieved to read what kind of guy sprang the trap. I had worried about possibility that some young kid, undergrad, not even computer science major, might get it. But this guy is clearly typical member of the technician class. Might even be one of the guys that has flown those fucking jets over my home. This gives great relief to my choking, frustrated anger and sense of impotence against the system. At same time, must admit I feel badly about having crippled this man's arm. It has been bothering me a good deal. This is embarrassing because while my feelings are partly from pity, I am sure they come largely from the training, propaganda, brainwashing we all get, conditioning us to be scared by the idea of doing certain things. It is shameful to be under the sway of this brainwashing. But do not get the idea that I regret what I did. Relief of frustrated anger outweighs uncomfortable conscience. I would do it all over again.



Later, Kaczynski wrote:

> Further search of newspapers yielded . . . Hauser's arm was severed or nearly severed. Tips of three fingers torn off. Use of arm and hand will be permanently impaired. To what degree not known. Hauser father of two kids. He was working toward Ph.D., contrary to other paper that said Masters. He was afraid his "dream" was ruined. Dream was to be an astronaut. Imagine a grown man whose dream is to be an astronaut. I am no longer bothered by this guy partly because I just "got over it" with time, partly because his aspiration was so ignoble.

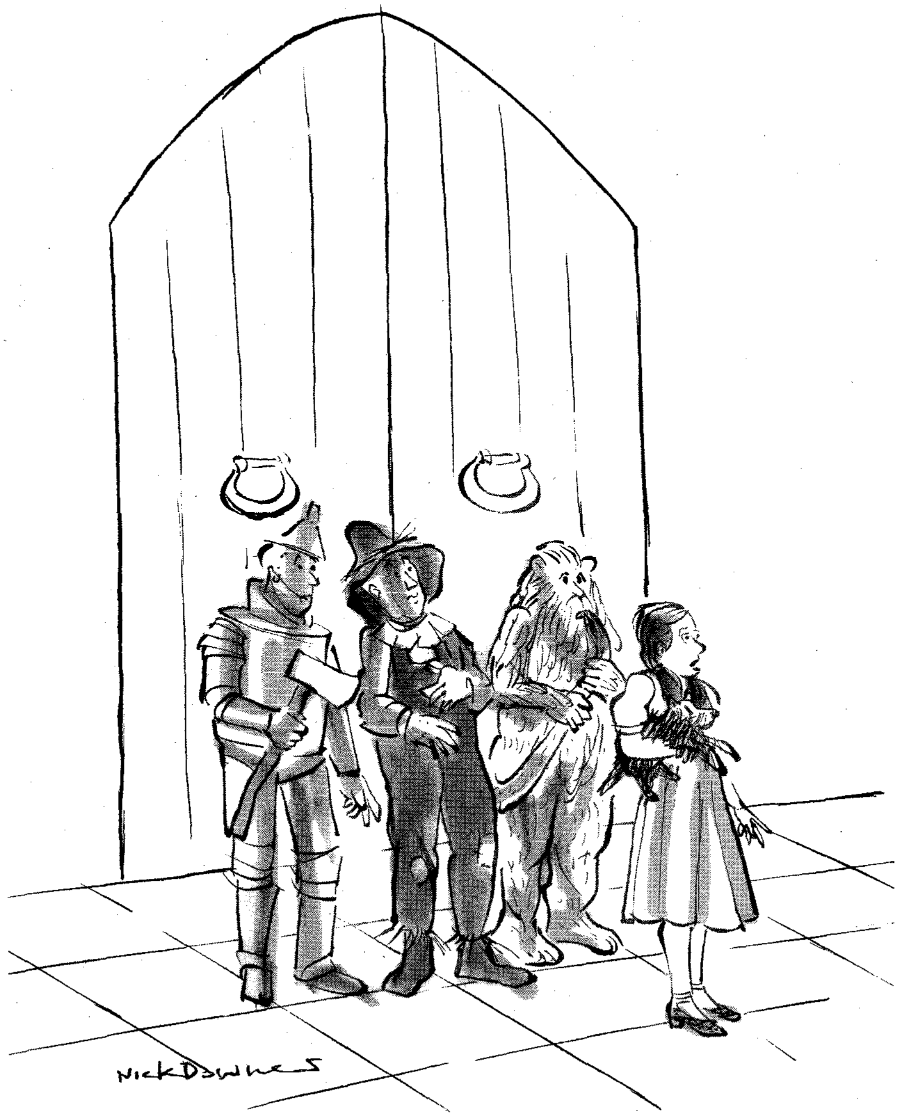
Watching Kaczynski listen to these "representations" of his crimes and his private, crabbed confessions, I struggled, without success, to comprehend the combination of such viciousness and such meekness in one man. He really was the mail bomber par excellence. He was also no stranger to ignoble ambition—his own being, apparently, a career of guilt-free killing and maiming of innocent people. I was reminded of a passage from an undated letter he had written to his brother:

> As you know, I have no respect for law or morality. Why have I never committed any crime? (of course, I'm not talking about something like shooting a grouse out of season now and then. I mean felony type stuff—burglary, arson, murder, etc.) Lack of motive? Hardly. As you know, I have a good deal of anger in me and there are lots of people I'd like to hurt. Risk? In some cases, yes. But there are other cases in which I can figure out ways of doing naughty things so that the risk would be insignificant. I am forced to the humiliating confession that the reason I've never committed any crime is that I have been successfully brainwashed by society. On an intellectual level I have only contempt for authority, but on an animal level I have all too much respect for it. My training has been quite successful in this regard and the strength of my conditioned inhibitions is such that I don't believe I could ever commit a serious crime. Knowing my attitude toward psychological manipulation of the individual by society, you can imagine how humiliating it is for me to admit to myself that I have been successfully manipulated.

On the Internet, where discussion groups are still devoted to topics like "Ted's Anger," there was much debate and rending of garments in the aftermath of the plea agreement. My own favorite posting was "He admitted to his crimes without shame, unlike that pussy McVeigh."

While some commentators speculated that Kaczynski had in fact brilliantly manipulated the judicial process, the defense psychiatrists were nonplussed by this image of Kaczynski as mastermind. What they saw, as the trial approached, was a spectacle of panic, with Kaczynski becoming "extremely disorganized," to quote Dr. Froming. A report by his jailers that Kaczynski, on the night after his request to retain Serra was denied, had apparently tried to hang himself in his cell seemed, if true, to favor the psychiatrists' view of his mental state. I saw it differently. Kaczynski struck me the way he had struck Judge Burrell, as lucid and well focussed, particularly when one considered that he was on trial for his life. He was just hopelessly trapped. He had tried each of his very few options, and then had taken the best deal he could get.

It is reported that while Kaczynski awaits formal sentencing, which will come in May, he has been writing furiously. Speculation about what he is writing has included a "Manifesto II," a detailed rebuttal of the psychiatric reports that found him mentally ill, and a desperate effort to withdraw his guilty plea, arguing that it was coerced. He has also been in touch with Tony Serra, who has declined to assist with any effort to withdraw his plea. The slight possibility that such an effort might succeed, gaining Kaczynski a trial, which might then result in a death sentence, is presumably too awful for even the True Believer to contemplate.



"And, please, sir, would it be too much to ask for a large and devoted gay following?"

I TALKED to David Kaczynski the day after the plea agreement was reached. He was full of praise for the Judge, for Ted's defense team, for Dr. Sally Johnson. He and his mother were immensely relieved, he said, but also immensely sad. "There is just so much that the public hasn't seen of Ted," he said. "He is so different from the outline the prosecution sketched of him. He is the most complex individual I have ever known—truly a mystery—and I thought that long before I ever imagined that he might be involved in attacks on people." Ted had always been at war with the idea that he had a conscience, David explained. "You could hear it in the journal entry they read in court about John Hauser. He really believes that conscience comes from brainwashing. It's not the way most of us see our socialization.... He is committed to a kind of rationality that ultimately doesn't create coherence within his own psyche. I guess there are people who really can dissociate—people in organized crime, or government leaders who commit great violence, and still sleep well at night. I don't think Ted ever slept well."

I thought of Ted's cabin, which his lawyers had brought to Sacramento on a flatbed truck, planning to show it to the jury and ask the question: "Would anyone but a certifiable lunatic choose such a primitive abode?" What they did not bring, of course, were the forests and rivers and mountains Kaczynski loved.

David started talking about the times he and Ted had spent together in Montana when Ted first lived there. He recalled with particular fondness a long backpacking trip. "I mean, it was long for me," he said, laughing softly. "A couple of weeks. We went way back in the mountains, where we found this pristine little lake. It seemed like no other people had been there. The lake was full of cutthroat trout, and this was before I became a vegetarian, so we just caught trout every day and that was what we ate. We actually camped on a little island. We waded out there. I guess we were thinking of bears."

"Bears can wade," I said.

"That's true," he said. "They can." ◆

PERSONAL HISTORY

MY FATHER'S CLOSET

The author reveals why he rejected a wardrobe worthy of the Duke of Windsor.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

WHEN I think about my father's long and eventful life, my mind's eye fills up with his silhouette at different times over the years, as defined by his beautifully tailored Savile Row suits. I see the closet where his suits hang. Viewed from his dressing room, my father's closet appears to be the ordinary, well-appointed closet of a successful businessman. It isn't until you stick your head inside that you become aware of a much larger collection of suits, hanging on a motorized apparatus, the kind you see at a dry cleaner's, extending up through the ceiling of the second floor and looming into the attic, which is filled with a lifetime of his clothes.

As with most bespoke suits, each jacket has the exact day, month, and year it was finished marked on the inside pocket. You can stand in the doorway, press a button, and watch as the history of my father, in the form of suits from all the different eras of his life, moves slowly past you. Drape suits, lounge suits, and sack suits, in worsted, serge, and gabardine; white linen suits for Palm Beach and Jamaica before the invention of air-conditioning; Glen plaids and knee-length loden coats for brisk Princeton-Harvard football games and a raccoon coat for Princeton-Dartmouth, which was later in the season. Suits for a variety of business occasions, from wowing prospective underwriters with a new offering (flashy pinstripes) to mollifying angry shareholders whose stock was diluted by the offering (humble sharkskin). Then, as the life-is-clothes approach succeeded at the office, suits for increasingly rarefied social events, from weddings at eleven and open-casket "viewings" at seven, to christenings, confirmations, and commencements, culminating in the outfits needed for four-in-hand driving, in which four horses are harnessed to a carriage—a sport that presents one with a daunting range of wardrobe challenges, determined by what time of day the driving event is taking place, whether it's in the country or in town, whether one is a spectator or a participant, or a member or a guest of the club putting it on. Three-quarter-length cutaway coats, striped trousers, fancy waistcoats, top hats: his four-in-hand outfits are the part of his closet that verge on pure costume.

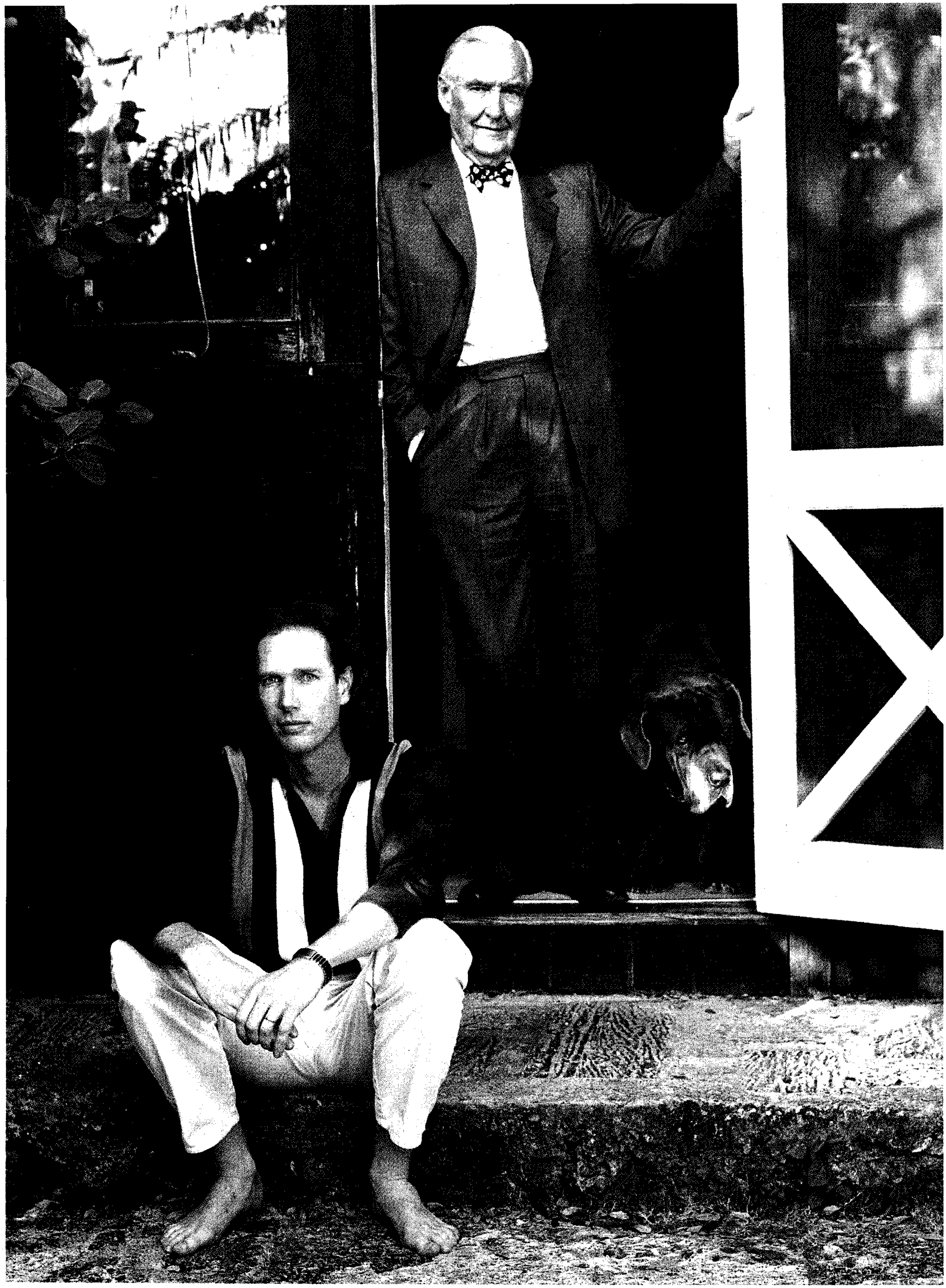
In a nearby closet are his shirts, made by Sulka or Lesserson or Turnbull & Asser; another closet contains a silken waterfall of neckties of every imaginable hue; still another holds shoe racks, starting at the bottom with canvas-and-leather newmarket boots and then rising in layers of elegance, through brown ankle-high turf shoes, reversed calf-quarter brogues, medallion toe-capped shoes with thick crêpe soles, and black wingtips with curved vamp borders, to the patent-leather dancing pumps at the top.

When he wasn't dressed up, my father was either in pajamas (sensible cotton pajamas like the ones Jimmy Stewart wears in "Rear Window") or naked. He was often naked. He embarrassed not a few of my friends by insisting on swimming naked in the pool when they were using it. But his nakedness was also a form of clothes, in the sense that it was a spectacle. Dressing without regard to clothes at all, occupying that great middle ground between dressed and undressed—dressing just to be warm or comfortable, which is the way most people wear clothes—did not seem to make sense to him.

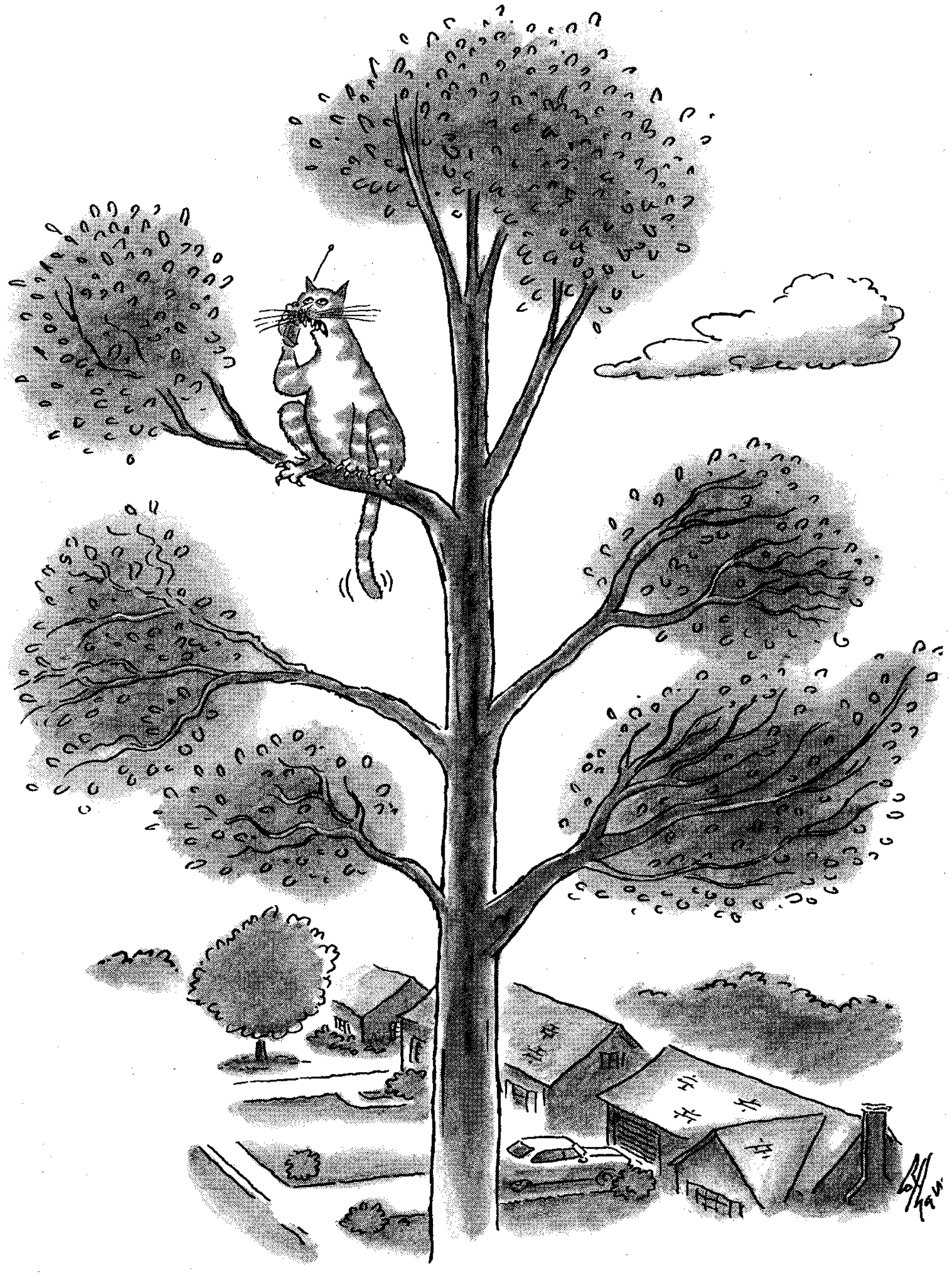
MY father's closet was his inheritance from his father. Not the clothes themselves, but the belief that a custom-made English suit, worn properly, was a powerful engine of advancement within the establishment. Without his clothes, my grandfather was an uneducated man who had spent his early years living and working in dirt, more or less. (The expression "dirt farmer" is still used sardonically by farmers in South Jersey to describe their profession: when you're out all day in that loamy clay and sand, you begin to feel as though the dirt itself were your product.) But, dressed in his Savile Row suits, my grandfather was a man of substance, taste, grace.

My father was more of a fashion innovator. He was the Duke of Edinburgh as played by Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. The cut of the clothes was still that of the sensible establishmentarian, but within those controlled contours you'd get flashes of purple and pink in the widespread-collared shirts, polka dots in the ties, and a green chalk stripe of imagination in the suits, signifying the American tycoon. In his youth he experimented with elements of both the Brooks Brothers style, which he encountered as an undergraduate, and his father's Edward, Prince of Wales look, hitting upon his own synthesis around 1950: double-breasted, high-waisted suits with wide lapels, snug in the body but with deep vents in the back.

The gaga-in-my-toga sixties, which threw men's fashion toward the more relaxed, anything-goes mentality that prevails in our time, burst against my father's solid shoulders of English wool and receded, leaving but one very interesting trace behind. This was a blue velvet Nehru smoking jacket, decorated with light-blue-and-navy flower-and-ivy psychedelia, and matched with midnight-blue velvet pants. It was made by Blades of London, and dated April 25, 1968, a period when the Nehru was enjoying a brief vogue among the men my father aspired to dress like, thanks



Separated by style: the author and his father in Coconut Grove, Florida, photographed by Alexis Rodriguez-Duarte.



"I've done it again."

mainly to Lord Snowdon's wearing a Nehru-style dinner jacket in a famous photograph in the sixties. I had never seen my father wear the outfit, but there it hung, among all the sober garments in his closet, a sign that somewhere inside the businessman was an artist.

The attic portion of my father's closet was for me the most alluring part of the house. It had a beauty born of the obsessive pursuit of perfection. Other men wore clothes easily and well, and took good care of them, but my father cared about his wardrobe to a degree that might have alarmed some of the men whose style he emulated, had they set foot in this room. That interested me. However, while a great imagination was evidently at work in here, my father's closet was also oppressive: the chalk lines and pinstripes and windowpane checks had a kind of suffocating effect on me. It became important for me to believe that these were the iron bars through which I would have to squeeze in the struggle for my own authority. My father's ways of making me into the man he wanted me to be were so subtle that they were often hard to notice, much less resist; clothes, however, were a patch of open ground on which I would engage him.

In an early photograph of my brother and me, we're dressed according to my father's Little Lord Fauntleroy ideals, in blue or gray serge short pants, with matching woollen blazers and woollen caps. I look miserable. Somewhere just out of the frame of the picture, Miss Mann, our scary English nanny, lurks.

In the fullness of time—I'm twelve—my father escorts me to Brooks Brothers and buys me my first No. 1 Sack Suit, exclaiming approvingly as I emerge from the fitting room, "John, you look exactly like an investment banker!" Five years later, he takes me to have my first suit of evening clothes made, at Hall Brothers in Oxford; still later I go with him to A-Man Hing Cheong, his Hong Kong tailor, to be "measured up" for a few "country" suits (a Glen plaid and a windowpane check) and, presumably, many others in the future. ("Big men can wear bolder plaids and more details without appearing to be fairies," Dad once advised me.)

My visit to the tailor turns out to be a rite of some kind of passage. "Which side?" he asks; he speaks a bit of English. He is kneeling in front of me, pointing at my crotch and waggling his forefinger back and forth.

"He wants to know which side you wear your pecker on," my father says.

"Yeh yeh, ha ha ha, yar peck-ah!"

In short, I am on my way to acquiring a fabulous closet of my own. And yet all is not well with the little lord. Without intending to, he manages to rip the silk lining in the beautiful camel's-hair coat, lose buttons off a Brooks suit, tear the seams around the pockets of the evening clothes. Inside my scrubbed and Etonian exterior there seems to be a dirt farmer struggling to get out.

"You're so *hard* on your clothes," my mother would say, and she was right. My boyhood closet was a riot of passive-aggressive behavior exhibited toward innocent garments. Beautiful slacks were bunched up on hangers, never hung along the pleat line. I always forgot to pull out the pocket flaps of my jackets, so that the next time I wore them they'd be full of creases. Shirts had fallen off their hangers and were lying on the floor, with shoes chucked into a pile on top of them. The shoes themselves were a mess—the leather, once soaked, was now flaking off, and the backs had all been crushed by my bad habit of cramming my feet into the shoes while they were still tied.

My brother, on the other hand, seemed effortlessly to acquire my father's ability with clothes. His closet was like an Eagle Scout's version of my father's. Mine was the Anticloset.

When it became clear that I was going to be more or less my father's shape and size, there was rejoicing in my parents' household. Naturally my father was pleased. He had never spent much time with me as a boy, being so busy providing all the amazing advantages that we enjoyed. We never threw a ball together, or went camping—he didn't have the clothes for it. But in the art of dressing for success he would gladly be my adviser and my friend.

My mother was also pleased. Having grown up with little money, she could never reconcile herself to her husband's clothing purchases (a Huntsman suit today costs more than three thousand dollars), to the point where my father had to smuggle new clothes into the house. Now, at least, his reckless extravagance would have a practical outcome: I would never have to buy any clothes of my own. I could just start wearing my father's, beginning with the earliest items in his wardrobe and working my way along the endless mechanical circle.

Not long after I moved to my first apartment in New York, my father took me to his New York tailor, Bernard Weatherill, to have a couple of his old suits refitted on me. The shop was upstairs on a midtown street—just a nameplate on a wall you'd pass every day in the city without giving it a second glance. The man who measured me up was an elderly white-haired Englishman, whose slightly stooped posture seemed like an unparsable synthesis of class-based deference and the physical toll of years of bending down to measure the bodies of young gentlemen like me. His tremendous discretion seemed to suck all the oxygen out of the air.

The jackets fitted almost perfectly. A little big in the body, but the length in the sleeves was beautiful. My father and the tailor beamed with pleasure. The pants, however, needed taking in; the tailor asked me to "stand naturally" as he marked them up. But for some strange reason I had suddenly forgotten how to stand naturally. It was as if I'd lost the concept of posture.

"Why are you standing like that?" my father said. "Knock it off."

DURING most of the eighties, these suits hung among my so-called wardrobe, like a landing party that had set up a base camp in my closet from which to launch an assault on the rest of my life. Can clothes be a form of destiny? My father had made no secret of his wishes for my career: an investment banker or, failing that (since I seemed to enjoy writing), an investment analyst. These were the clothes for the job.

Among these suits was an inky-blue-black drape suit, double-breasted, with three closely bunched parallel rows of silvery dot stripes, the groups of three about half an inch apart. The peaked lapels extended to the bottom buttons of the jacket, while the cuffed pants had a deep pleat near the fly buttons and a shallower

"He's great, and not too much of a threat to me."

pleat two inches farther out, which was immediately echoed by the almost hidden slash of the pocket. The date inside the jacket pocket said "9/21/61," although in style it was fifties—a suit that Burt Lancaster could have worn in "Sweet Smell of Success." My father was forty-four when he had the suit made and was just starting out on a new career, having been fired from his previous one. He had a new wife and a new family: I was two then, and my little brother, Bruce, had just been born. It was not, perhaps, the best time to order yet another custom-made suit. But if Dad felt at all uncertain about his new responsibilities, or about the future and his title to it, his doubts were not expressed in these dot stripes. It was a highly confident suit.

I wore this suit to certain pre-crash eighties evenings. I was aware of an authority—when I wasn't attempting to undermine it with irony—that I didn't feel in *my* clothes. Men followed the suit with their eyes as I walked through a restaurant. Women wanted to put their hands on the fabric. Worn properly, a suit like this was clearly capable of incredible things. Perhaps it could attract some of the money, beauty, and power that were in the air in the mid-eighties in New York—guys I had been in college with a few years earlier were making two million dollars a year selling mortgage-backed securities—and redirect that energy into me.

My own choice of a career for myself, writing, did not require much in the way of clothes. (Part of the reason I was first drawn to writing as a profession was that it appeared possible almost never to wear a necktie.) But as I had success at my work, performed in T-shirt and jeans, something unexpected happened. On receiving payment for a writing project, I could think of nothing I wanted more to do with it than spend it on clothes. I may have rebelled against my father's closet, but the fetish for clothes appeared to be deeply implanted in me.

With my check in my pocket, I'd set out for the bank, and then for Barneys, at Seventh Avenue and Seventeenth Street. My behavior on entering the store was eccentric. I appeared calm, standing there pensively fingering some fabric, but inside my head a fashion psychopath was at work. Three hundred dollars for a pair of pants! Then again, they're asking two hundred and thirty for a shirt. And pants are more of a major item than a shirt, so in a way three hundred is cheap for pants. Thus did I gradually reduce the price through rationalization, until I heard myself saying, "O.K., I'll take them." Signing the receipt felt like the moment after an accident, when you can't believe it's happened. Then, to prove that it wasn't that bad to spend three hundred dollars for a pair of pants, I'd go into another part of the store and spend two hundred and ninety dollars for a merino wool turtleneck.

I was drawn to the most expensive brands. Only a famous label had the talismanic power to ward off the Savile Row succubus that lived in my father's clothes. To my father, the whole concept of designer labels in men's fashion was ridiculous, another triumph of the marketers. What did these swishy women's dressmakers know about making clothes for a man? Ralph Lauren has made a fortune imbuing his brand with images of people like my father, but my father would never, ever wear Ralph Lauren.

The first time I wore an expensive Italian suit I had bought with my own money, an Ermenegildo Zegna, was to meet my father at "21" for lunch. He arrived at the restaurant first, and as I walked in I saw that his attention was instantly riveted on

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MODERATELY

> ...and as the last will come a sort of moderato part (some of which is multiple motions, quick, slow, hampered, expressive, popular, and peopled speech...)
>
> —*Stepan Wolpe.*

The fox brooding and the old people smelling
and the tiebreaker—why did I not think of that?
Why have doubts upon me come? Why
this worldliness?
And I remember no longer at the age of sixteen,
and at the age of seventeen great rollers
eating into night, I uncared for,
stopping among the weeds along the way. Phantom
harvesters hovered. And the great, dry creekbed was a sea
of gravel and stones, the willows were capsized ships,
and none of it was for now.

There is a draft
in the room
and all along the room a sight that is like living
and looking out over a situation. The periods danced in a sentence,
and it was my way, the one I chose, even if I didn't choose it,
or like it, was all a coming on,
downpour,
marooned on slopes.

And then the burst of it.
He knew what the world's going to be like I think,
so why the explosions? And caught in the draft,
one fell from darkness, two fell from darkness,
yet another. Maybe that's dust a very fine kind of dust and I eat it,
it goes on thrumming, seated in the back row of the orchestra,

men masturbating here and there and like I said the clock
is tremendous,
wider than any minute hand or hour hand.
And sheepish it fell out of books:
the land of painful blisses,
the man who stubbed his toe.
All around us pain came sledding in,
and am I like this today, tomorrow, and two
tickets please, the boy and the ruffian come undone,
he was in the park, it was the salutary last person
to hoodwink you and all is well.

There were times a kind of cream was on the jagged borders
or suchlike events and carnivals, and you sat, smiling,
the tongue unleashed from its surroundings. Why was I never here?
Why such playacting? Didn't I ever realize the kernels *are* deep-seated,
that Everyman will overrun his banks just like an errant stream,
and cardboard principles will be jostled? O who
mentioned this session? What is the matter with truth and paying
and all over the paisley fields dominoes are braying,
a matter of luck, or chance, it seems? Who broke the next dish?

Why is that man crying,
what does he mean to do? Impertinent, in person,
what does he mean to do,
if these capers are not unusual
and bricks merge with sand, the unusual
at its best as usual, and can't we give up? What
would be the point of continuing? I can't smoke this weed,
I give it back, we are all blessed, commensurates within
a star where many things fit, too many, or not too many, whatever
it says about you, whatever saves.

—John Ashbery

the boxy, ventless, close-to-the-hips silhouette of my jacket. P. G. Wodehouse, describing the reaction of Jeeves upon spotting his master wearing a scarlet cummerbund with his evening clothes, wrote that "Jeeves shied like a startled mustang." My father, watching this Italian garment moving toward him around the checked tablecloths, reacted similarly. He recovered in time to greet me cordially; then, plucking the lapel of the Zegna between his thumb and forefinger, he looked at the label.

"Hmp," he said softly. That was all: "Hmp." It was the sound of a world ending.

In recent years, I have sometimes stood before my own closet and tried to work out what's going on inside. Here and there is a glimpse of the kind of madness that animates Dad's wardrobe, albeit diminished. My father can walk into a room and simply by the contours of his clothing take it over. Nothing in my closet, not even the black Prada suit on which I spent a fortune last fall (taking care to conceal the receipt from my wife, just the way Dad used to do), could accomplish that. Nevertheless, some semblance of what might charitably be called a "personal style" seems to be struggling to emerge from the Banana Republic "hacking" pants, the soft-collar shirts from Katharine Hamnett, and a lightweight wool navy-blue blazer with a twill finish by Hugo Boss, which hangs alongside my Patagonia Synchilla vest.

I am grateful for the rise of "technical fabrics" like lycra and spandex, which combine the wrinkle-less properties of wool with the lightness of cotton, and give the garment that little bit of stretch the salesclerks make so much of these days. Though I was hopeless when it came to urban dressing, I was knowledgeable about fabrics for the wilderness, and as the technical fabrics and their styles made inroads into men's fashions, I began to find ways of caring about indoor clothes, too. I had a breakthough during a holiday in Paris a couple of years ago, when, strolling around the Eighth in my usual backpack-like gear, including stretchy black stovepipe trousers that Patagonia calls "guide pants," I realized that I was not too far from the Armani and Prada guys.

While I have only a few of my father's shirts left—I am slowly deaccessioning them to friends my size who have jobs that require dress shirts—I have nostalgically hung on to most of the suits he has given me, although each year I find fewer occasions to wear one. Last week, I took two pairs of his trousers and a sensational plaid suit to the St. Luke's Thrift Shop, in the Village.

The prize of my collection is the blue velvet Nehru smoking jacket, which I inherited six or seven years ago. I began wearing it at Christmas, more or less as a joke, but each year I look for more excuses to put it on. Last Halloween, I went to a party as Austin Powers, but somewhere in the course of the evening the role I was playing blended in with a natural predilection for the costume, until I wasn't wearing the blue Nehru in the spirit of Halloween anymore. Believing myself to have been a slob all these years, I realized I'd turned out to be a fop instead. I would dress like Austin Powers all the time if I could get away with it. ◆

A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE POWER CRITIC

Clement Greenberg, one of America's most powerful arbiters of culture, ruled with his pen—and his fists.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

THE first pages of the life foreshadow the bad news on the way. The troubled five-year-old "loner," who "refused" to play with other children, is taken on a trip to the country where, as his terrified young cousin watches from her hiding place, he picks out an unoffending goose, tracks it down relentlessly, and clubs it to death with a shovel. Anyone familiar with the varieties of popular biography can sense the future as it approaches: the slow escalation in targets, the growing taste for blood, the rise to bigger and uglier assaults, the sordid end. The die is cast; the boy will become an art critic.

And not just any art critic. The boy with the shovel was Clement Greenberg, who became the dominant art critic of the American mid-century—the critic who, legend insists, gave diktats from the pages of *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, and *Artforum* to two generations of artists, relocated the center of the art world from Paris to New York, made oversized abstract watercolors into the single style of the American museum, forcing two generations of realists to live in basements and pass still-lifes around like samizdat, and generally tracked down all the art world's wild geese and clubbed them senseless. Florence Rubenfeld, an art journalist, has now produced "Clement Greenberg: A Life" (Scribner; $30), the first full-length biography of Greenberg since his death, in 1994. Far from being a revisionist (Greenberg has had more revisionists since his heyday than he ever had disciples during it), Rubenfeld has given us an absorbing, fair-minded biography, which is scrupulously sympathetic to her subject, or at least to his writing, and rightly feels that he's been slighted since he died. Yet the Greenberg who emerges from her research is an even more repellent personality than his detractors imagined. Grasping and cruel, cold and power-hungry, predatory and lecherous, he seems less like an intellectual than like a mogul, closer to Harry Cohn than to Irving Howe. According to his biographer, he bullied and lied, fell into a cult-like psychoanalytic group, neglected his wives and his children, and regularly took a swing at anybody he thought might be about to argue with him. Even his cocaine and heroin habits, at the end of his life, have a lurid, show-business quality, hard to associate with the rolled-up sleeves and kitchen debates of the Great Generation of Jewish intellectuals.

Rubenfeld also has to battle a couple of overcharged myths that make Greenberg the center of not one but two conspiracies. The conservative story, put forward by Tom Wolfe in "The Painted Word," is that Greenberg was the scam artist at the center of a vast con game (he was the Duke, Harold Rosenberg the Dauphin) designed to draw American art away from its real heritage, of hallucinatory high-octane realism, and make it tamely follow European-type dictation: Greenberg was a fanatic for flatness, and he flattened out American art. The opposing, yet oddly complementary, left-wing view is that Greenberg was the mouthpiece in a C.I.A.-sponsored covert action taken by the New York art market against the Paris one. (You will meet Parisian art-world types who will tell you this in all seriousness; in fact, you rarely meet any other kind.)

However the story gets told, and whatever end Greenberg was believed to be pursuing, he remains fixed in place as the type and image of the dictatorial critic—the power critic, in all his (or her) glory and terror, who exemplifies what terrible things can happen when the back of the book gets out of hand. So a study of Greenberg's life can open on a bigger question about the role of criticism in modern society: How do the inevitably tendentious and improvised opinions of one writer become a dogma that shapes consciousness and spreads fear and actually changes, or is seen to change, the art form he (or she) writes about?

Some of the answers seem simple and nearly universal: people take other people at their own estimation—declare yourself a prophet, no matter how weak your powers are, and amazing numbers of clever people will congregate at your feet, no matter how smelly they may be. Greenberg's power was also a tribute to the enduring spell of left-wing historicism; in part, his influence depended on how skillfully he managed to smuggle a lot of the Marxist thinking of the nineteen-thirties into American art theory, through the weirdly misnamed doctrine of formalism, where it remains permanently stuck in our esophagus, like a bit of undigested cafeteria cheesecake.

More than anything else, his career shows how much can be accomplished by a single, strong idea matched to a single, strong personality. Greenberg became a dictator-critic because his judgments were, at a crucial moment, courageous, and right. He was never the pilot of the New York School, but for a long time he was the wind in its sails, and it wasn't all hot air.

CLEMENT GREENBERG was born in 1909, the son of a wealthy Jewish retailer. Like so many Jewish intellectuals and artists—Barnett Newman and Diane Arbus are two more—he rose not from the Lower East Side streets but from the comfortable upper reaches of the garment trade and the department-store business. He went upstate to Syracuse, not to City College, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa. He got married and had a son and then went to work for the Customs Service in (and eventually this title would ring with ironies) the Appraisers Division of the Department of Wines and Liquors. Sometime around 1936, Clem's bohemian cousin Sonia, who lived in the Village—every Jewish boy of that vintage had a bohemian cousin Sonia living in the Village—had him over and introduced him to her friend Harold Rosenberg and his wife,

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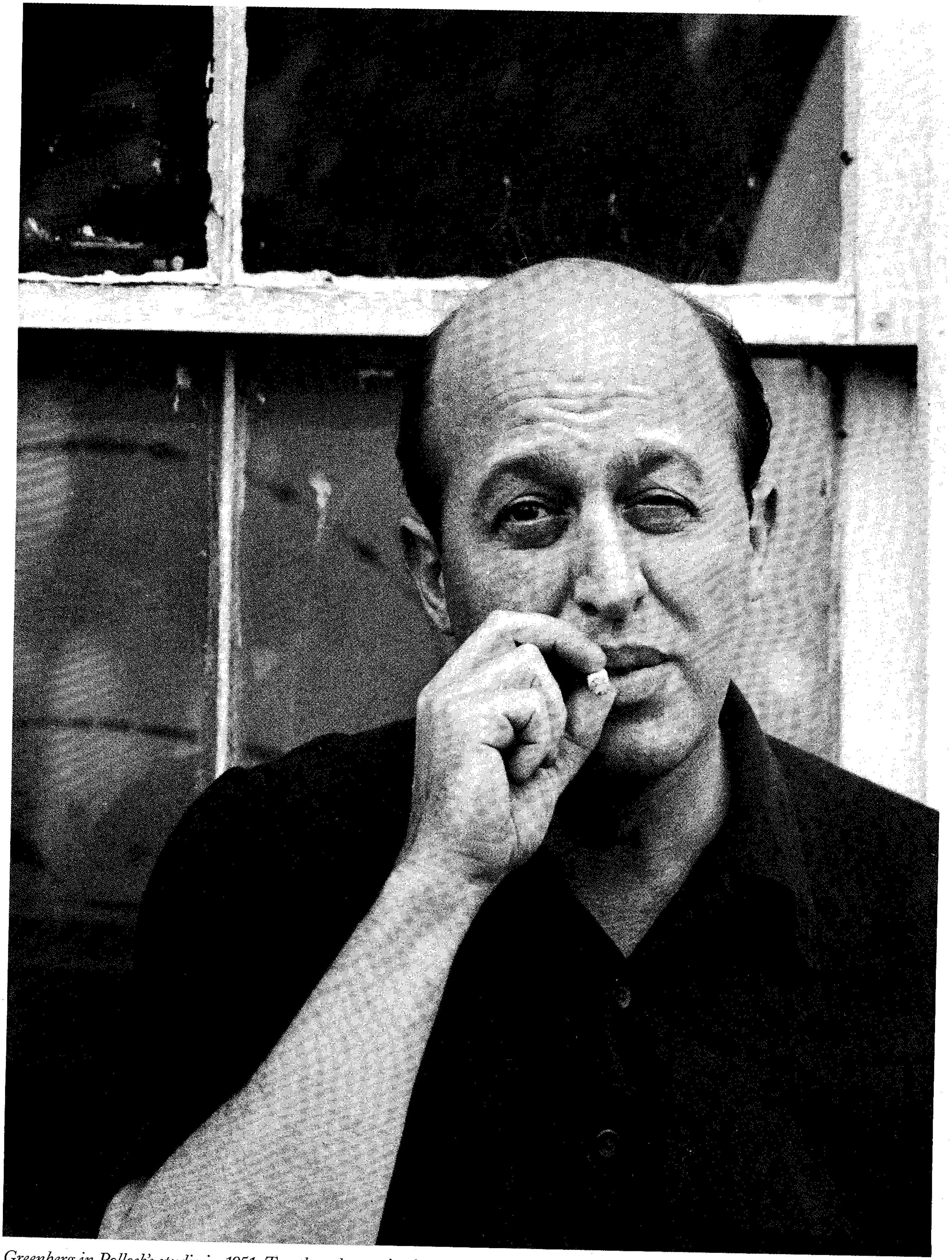


Greenberg in Pollock's studio in 1951: Together, they arrived at a hyper-aggressive, hard-drinking style. Photographs by Hans Namuth.

May Tabak. Harold was, at that point, a poet, and May kept an antique store that was "really a junk store," as Sonia later remembered. The two men who were to dominate American art writing became friends, and Rosenberg introduced the younger man to the critic Lionel Abel, who had made a reputation for himself as a Surrealist by setting his hair on fire in a café. Through Abel and Rosenberg, Greenberg became involved in left-wing anti-Stalinist politics. The Moscow purge trials, though they seem to us the least of Stalinist sins, had shaken the New York left.

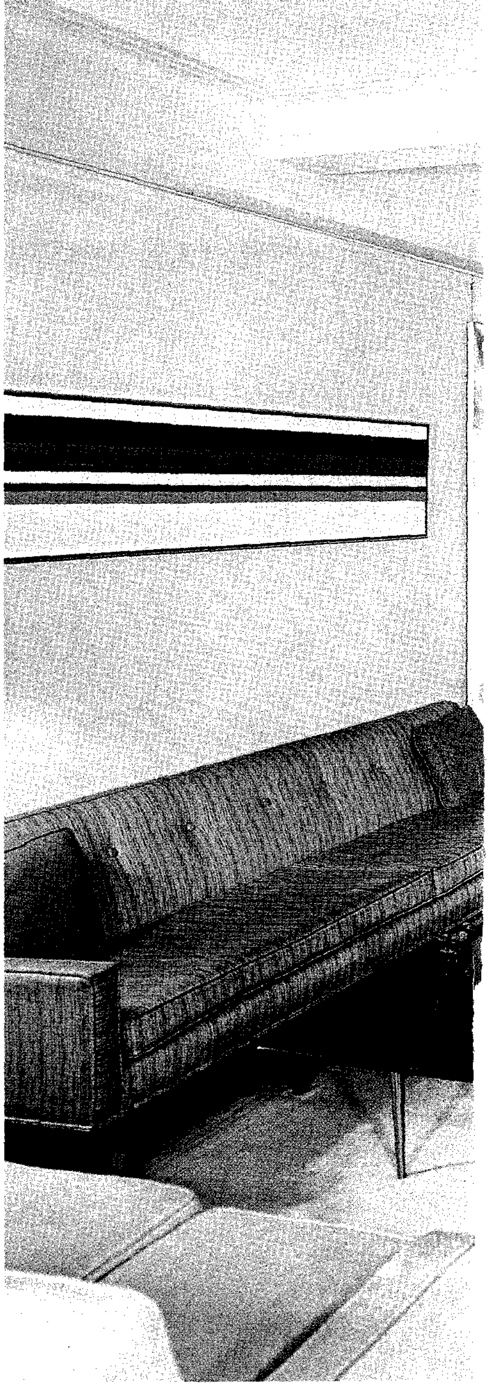
Earlier in the thirties, Abel and Rosenberg had written for *Partisan Review*, then a Party-line publication, and now they helped revive it, to become the voice of the anti-Stalinist left. Though they were Trotskyist (or, more disparagingly, Trotskyite), their Trotskyism was a little like the Maoism of the French students of '68. It just meant "still left, and not leaving." Searching for an ideological faith, they instinctively took up the modernist art and poetry they loved, which was anathema to the Stalinists, as both a flag to carry and a cross to bear. Through the promise of modernist transcendence, and the weight of modernist disillusion, it might be possible to re-create left-wing idealism—to have something to believe in. Much later, in an essay called "The Late Thirties in New York," Greenberg wrote, "Some day it will have to be told how 'anti-Stalinism,' which started out more or less as 'Trotskyism,' turned into art for art's sake, and thereby cleared the way, heroically, for what was to come."

Though Greenberg was part of the *Partisan Review* circle from the beginning, one gets the sense that he never entirely belonged. He had no sense of humor or, anyway, of one-liners—a big deficit in that crowd. "Phillips and Rahv"—the *P.R.* editors—"could put me down and they could outtalk me," he admitted later, adding, "And how." A sign of his remove from the general current is revealed in a single fact: Greenberg must have been the only member of the *Partisan Review* circle to be a Yankees fan. He liked in baseball what he liked in art: home runs and winning.

His early stuff is distinguished mostly by the independence of his taste. He wrote in enthusiastic praise of Trollope's apparently formless novel "The American Senator" at a time when Trollope was still regarded as very minor, and he also wrote perhaps the first serious piece about Thurber's cartoons. When even Edmund Wilson was treating Kafka as Central European whimsy, Greenberg argued unequivocally for Kafka's greatness. But Greenberg was not a natural writer, and the weakness for abstract periphrasis that dogged all his work appears even in his letters. Trying to describe barracks life, he arrived at "You are put into mobile confinement along with a conglomeration of males under the assumption that the purpose of the confinement transcends all personal considerations"—i.e., you're in the Army now.

He wrote an essay entitled "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," which was rejected at first but at last appeared in *P.R.*, in 1939. It was a standard essay topic of the period, as the Sublime and the Beautiful would have been two hundred years before. Everyone was writing about popular art and high culture; even as unpolemical a critic as James Agee had a shot at it in the *P.R.* pages, in 1944, in an article on "pseudo-folk," which covers a lot of the same ground as Greenberg's essay. Greenberg's version was, in retrospect, more important for its title and its tone than for its argument and its actual content. Basically, he took the diagnosis that T. S. Eliot had been offering for many years—that the degradation of traditional aristocratic culture by capitalism could be countered only by a committed, marginalized avant-garde—and made it face front. To a generation that had lost its faith in popular movements without losing its taste for utopian imaginings, Greenberg offered a way forward: the future would be fought on the field of culture, where the odds were better.

"Avant-Garde and Kitsch" made Greenberg's reputation overnight, yet he himself always recognized that it was apprentice work, weak and underargued. The low category of "kitsch" was allowed to become a catch-all for fundamentally different things. Greenberg, who loved the movies and jitterbugging and once made a sharp, extended comparison of Randall Jarrell and Fred Astaire, knew perfectly well that, whatever the "low" term was in the scheme of modern culture, it was much more various than the essay allowed. Jumping up and down on *Saturday Evening Post* covers and the poetry of Edgar Guest, as he had done, hardly covered the ground or advanced



Greenberg's living room was a shrine

COURTESY CONDÉ NAST ARCHIVE

he artists he championed. Oversized abstract watercolors became the single style of American museums under his critical reign.

the argument. "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" was, to use what later became a favorite Greenberg word, a very *square* piece. But it was inestimably important; it made social snobbery look progressive.

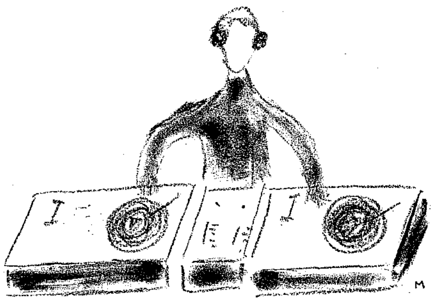
Pretty much on the strength of that essay, Greenberg got a job as the regular art critic for *The Nation* in 1942, in the era when Agee was writing in it about movies, Randall Jarrell about poetry, and B. H. Haggin on music. It was from *The Nation*, far more than from *Partisan Review*, that Greenberg's reputation spread. Yet immediately, in an early piece for *The Nation*, he went ridiculously wrong writing about a Mondrian. In describing the painter's "Broadway Boogie Woogie"—not the hardest picture in the world to describe—he got things so balled up that he had to apologize, albeit with dignity, in the following week's issue: "My memory played tricks when I discussed last week the new Mondrian at the Museum of Modern Art. The painting had no orange, purple, or impure colors."

The orange-and-purple Mondrian raises the vexed question of Greenberg's eye. Did he have one? The truth is that what is taken for an eye in art criticism is often something else. Sometimes an eye is really a nose, the ability to smell out quality without being quite able to diagnose its sources. Sometimes an eye is really a mouth, the ability to turn visual impression into a metaphor without much attention to detail. And sometimes what is called an eye is really an elbow. That was Greenberg's case. He had the ability to push his way past the people and the received opinion crowded in front of the picture and make an original judgment. His eye may have been weak, but his elbow was terrific, and, in a way, that was just as good. If he never had a gift for close description, he was often able to shove his way through to concise moral summary. There may have been oranges and purples in his Mondrians, but when, a little later, he came to praise Matisse, he could write of the paintings, "Their controlled sensuality, their careful sumptuousness, prove that the flesh is as capable of virtue as the soul and can enjoy itself with equal rigor."

In November of 1943, Greenberg went to Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery, on Fifty-seventh Street, and saw the first one-man show of an Arizona cowboy artist named Jackson Pollock. The relationship between Pollock and Greenberg, so potent for American art, was also potent for New York style. Pollock and Greenberg arrived together at the hyper-aggressive, hard-drinking style that dominated the art world until the arrival of Andy Warhol. Tight-lipped and short-tempered, it was a style that seems to have been made in a marriage of strategic Jewish drinking—just enough to loosen your tongue and get you past your "niceness"—and all-out Western, three-week, hair-raising, Huck Finn's-dad-style benders. ("He was the most radical alcoholic I ever met," Greenberg said once of Pollock, weirdly bestowing his favorite adjective of praise.)

Greenberg soon became Pollock's major champion, and within the year he had also taken up the cause of the painters loosely grouped around Pollock, who later became known as the Abstract Expressionists. He declared Pollock to be America's most powerful painter, and announced that, along with Robert Motherwell, William Baziotes, "and only a comparatively few others," he represented the "future of American painting." Greenberg carried on his campaign so forcefully that *Life* itself—in those days, the real voice of America—took up the Pollock problem and, surprisingly, said that Greenberg might be right. It was one of the great winning bets in the history of criticism, and Greenberg put his money down early, when the odds were longest.

What did Greenberg see in Pollock and his fellows? The popular myth, even among art historians, suggests that it was their unequivocal abstraction—the absence of social content—that attracted him: Greenberg had rejected history for form and believed that art should be reduced to flat color on a flat plane. But his real view, as it evolved during the decade that started in 1945, was much more complex. He did not for a moment believe, as most twentieth-century formalists in art have, that the way a picture looked was always more important than what it showed. He did not think that what looked like God and saints and maple trees in Old Masters' paintings were "really" formal masses. His view was much more historically conditioned than that. He regarded the loss of a common language of representation as a modern tragedy—a loss that could never be recovered. "Unable to represent the exterior world suggestively enough, pictorial art is driven to express as directly as possible only that which goes on inside the self," he wrote soon after looking at Pollock's first show. Renaissance illusion had become illustration and could be sustained only by government diktat, as in socialist realism, or by commercial cynicism, as in *Saturday Evening Post* covers. The exhaustion of the old illusionist language was apparent even when it was tarted up, as in Surrealism, to look arresting or weird.



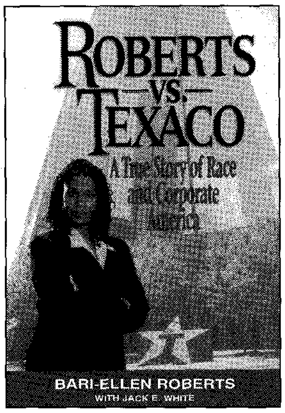
The most radical and most original possibility for renewal, he felt, could be found in the most decorative, feminine, and complacent-seeming corners of modern art, particularly the art of Matisse and Monet. "Sixty years of modernist painting have finally brought this home to us, now that the first seed of modernism, planted by the Impressionists, has turned out to be the most radical of all," he wrote. Matisse in his studios, Monet in his water-lily garden had pointed the way toward an art where pure color and flat, all-over "symphonic" design, rather than relief illusion in depth, could make something noble of the little purity that modern history had left to painting. For Greenberg, Pollock poured paint not to engage in a kind of existential dance of death but simply to create a line sufficiently long and sinuous to act as an equivalent to the oceanic, lulling surfaces of a Monet water-lily painting. Pollock "literally pulverized value contrasts in a vaporous dust of interfused lights and darks in which every suggestion of a sculptural effect was obliterated," Greenberg wrote approvingly. What he first glimpsed in Pollock, and later came to love in Mark Rothko and Newman, was what he had first loved in Monet: the ability to create a world instead of merely copying one. The point of Greenberg's system was not to enforce a reductive technical value, like "flatness" or "truth to the picture plane." The point was to connect the high-dandyish aestheticism of one line of modernism, that of Matisse and Monet, to the world-devouring, utopian ambitions of another line, that of Kandinsky and the German Expressionists, and show that they might be headed in the same direction. It was as if a young movie critic today were to insist that Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino had their real roots in the movies of Busby Berkeley and in Jacques Demy's "Umbrellas of Cherbourg."

There are, of course, holes in the argument wide enough to drive a truck through—so wide that by now a six-lane toll highway runs where the theory once stood. Why, after all, is the situation of modern painting so different from that of modern literature, which has not had to give up its ability to talk about the real world in a representational language? And why, even if the decorative element is worth pursuing, should it be the only element allowed? What is crucial is to see how much Greenberg's theory was an advance on all the theories of abstract art that had preceded it. Those had been either naïvely visionary—in this picture you see another dimension!—or earnestly dopey in their insistence that abstract art mechanically encrypted particular emotions, with big red blotches equalling excitement, droopy forms making you feel sad, and so on. Greenberg's theory had enough historical reach to explain why pictures with only a decorative presence might still be radical, revolutionary, and profound. His central insight was that you didn't have to add anxiety to aestheticism to make pictures look modern. The anxiety was implicit in the aestheticism in the first place.

The problem with Greenberg's theory is not that it removes art from history; putting abstract art into social history is just what it does well. What the theory lacks is, precisely, formalism: a working, flexible language in which to talk about aesthetic effects, instead of just asserting that they are a nice thing to have. Greenberg was never a formalist in the sense that art writers as different as Kenneth Clark and Thomas Hess have been formalists, fluently able to articulate the relationship between the way pictures look and what they mean. Greenberg's theory worked at too high a level of historical generalization to do that. There is a dead space between the theory that insists on aesthetic purity and the language that tries to talk about its

(Advt.)

True heroes are rare and special people, and much appreciated in our fiction and our real lives.



A former executive at Texaco, **Bari-Ellen Roberts** recognized a grave injustice in the workplace and felt compelled to put it right. After her first year at the petroleum giant she thought she was up against a glass ceiling. But after three years, she knew it was a brick wall—for all black employees. The class action suit she brought against the company on behalf of its 1,400 African American employees—which ultimately resulted in a historic $176 million settlement—was front page news across the nation and around the world. In ***ROBERTS VS. TEXACO***, she tells an epic true story of high-level deceptions, legal tactics, and astonishing reversals of fortune, providing us with a unique insider's perspective into a groundbreaking legal victory that might well change forever the way "business as usual" is conducted in corporate America.

ERIC S. NYLAND
DRY WATER

Eric S. Nyland's ***DRY WATER*** is a novel of the contemporary fantastic in which the fate of humanity is placed in the hands of one man, a writer seeking anonymous refuge in a reborn New Mexican ghost town with a reputation for inexplicable phenomena, and a mysterious spring that flows through history. This is a strange and original take on the eternal war between good and evil; an imaginative tale of Navajo wisdom and magic, life, death, and everything in-between that manages to reshape time and many realities.

PEST
CONTROL
BILL FITZHUGH

Bob Dillon—the hapless protagonist of author **Bill Fitzhugh**'s comic thriller ***PEST CONTROL***—is a hero in spite of himself. A down-on-his-luck exterminator from Queens, he distributes a flyer advertising his services as a bug killer, and unwittingly gets mixed up in the world of international assassination-for-hire. Fitzhugh's fast-paced and funny tall tale works on several different levels; the sort of madcap adventure one might expect if Woody Allen directed a Schwarzenegger action movie.

We'll talk again.

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NICOTINE
PATCHES
Victoria Roberts

"Do you have these in menthol?"

achievements, and this space can be filled only by hand-waving, ex-cathedra, it's-true-because-I-say-it-is pronouncements. Greenberg could explain why aestheticism on a grand scale was the right path for art to take, but all he could say about particular aesthetic value was that he knew it when he saw it.

This is not to say that Greenberg didn't have profound feelings about individual pictures. His reputation as a connoisseur depended on his sense of what makes pictures "work" or not. Soon after his 1944 revelation, he began a lifelong series of studio visits, in which he would announce what was good in the artist's work and what wasn't, picture by picture. He would walk into the studio, turn things upside down, pick out a remote or marginal picture, and declare that it was the only one worth preserving, and artists would listen.

Greenberg knew the heart jumps of sensibility as well as anybody did. But his system, and his power, depended on referring the judgments back to history, which didn't have to justify its taste. This gave a Humpty-Dumpty element to a lot of his language. Praising Newman, Pollock, and Rothko for offering a "plenitude of presence," he explained, "And when I say 'plenitude of presence' I don't mean a newfangled thrill, but something whose equivalent I find in the successful art of the past." (Words mean just what I mean them to, and no more.)

He used a disingenuous, passive-aggressive historical voice in which strong advocacy was masked as disinterested dialectics, and reinforced by a deceptively bland use of "may" and "seems" constructions. Discussing, in 1948, the "all-over" structure of Pollock, which he had been the first to isolate, he said that a Pollock "relies on a surface knit together of identical or closely similar elements which repeat themselves without marked variation from one edge of the picture to the other," and added, "The dissolution of the pictorial into sheer texture, into apparently sheer sensation . . . seems to speak for and answer something profound in contemporary sensibility. . . . The 'all-over' may answer the feeling that all hierarchical distinctions have been, literally, exhausted and invalidated; that no area or order of experience is intrinsically superior, on any final scale of values, to any other area or order of experience . . . but for the time being, all we can conclude is that the future of the easel picture as a vehicle of ambitious art has become problematical." Here the purring machinery of Marxist dialectics is taken over to make a particular painter's style, as diagnosed by Greenberg, sound like a neutral, inevitable "development," as ordained by the Goddess of History. Greenberg abandoned leftist views on art, but he had a naturally Marxist temperament in argument. *He* hadn't made up his mind; it was just History, doing her stuff. (Pauline Kael, another inspired power critic, achieved something similar by writing in the complicitous second person: "you" feel this and that when "you" look at a movie. It wasn't her making all those judgments; it was the Pop Audience there beside her.)

GREENBERG'S aesthetic theory, left to make its own way, would be no more likely to drive a path to power than anybody else's aesthetic theory. What gave it first urgency and then something like imperial domination was his aura of conviction, which was linked in complicated ways to his extraordinary physical potency. Max Beerbohm spoke about an encounter he had with the great American heavyweight Gene Tunney at a dinner at George Bernard Shaw's flat in Adelphi Terrace; Tunney, Beerbohm recalled, took him by the arm, led him to Shaw's window, and forced him to watch the sunset. "I think I had *never* before met anyone so militantly aesthetic," Beerbohm remarked, and that is Greenberg in a nutshell: the fighting man of nuance, forcing you to watch the subtle discriminations or he'll slug the wrinkles offa you.

Behind most charismatic domination, including the charismatic domination exerted by a critic, there is almost always a purely physical presence. Even by hard-drinking *Partisan Review* standards, Greenberg was exceptionally violent: that goose did not die in vain. While he was earning his reputation as the leading American art critic, he was also earning a reputation as someone who "goes around socking people." He once slugged the painter and movie critic Manny Farber for telling Delmore Schwartz that Greenberg had stolen his ideas about scale in painting from Farber. "I must have then tapped him lightly and he quit. He just quit," Greenberg said afterward. Greenberg once beat up Lionel Abel when Abel was recovering from a lung ailment. "The only reason he got struck was because he accepted my invitation to come downstairs," Greenberg explained afterward in a letter to Dwight Macdonald. Considerately, he added that, although Abel had it coming, at least he and Abel were in agreement that Macdonald was a fool. (So come on down, Dwight!) Another night, he socked little Max Ernst for dumping an ashtray on his head and calling him "king of the critics."

The bizarre thing is that it increased his score: intelligent people admired him for it. Hannah Arendt, once again earning her reputation as the Mrs. Magoo of the New York intellectuals—an amiable visionary who could not see what was right in front of her nose—maintained that Greenberg's readiness to hit people was a sign of his vocation for criticism. The trouble with intellectuals, this intellectual remarked, is that "everything became a matter of talk, talk, talk." Greenberg was admirable because he conformed to Camus's "virile ideal" and had "some sense of manliness and honor."

Few power critics do not have a reputation for physical potency. From Dr. Johnson, who knocked down publishers, to Stanley Crouch, there is nothing so likely to extend a critic's reputation as a good left jab. It isn't that readers are intimidated into agreement by the critic's fists. ("Accept the logic of this review or I'll come over to your house.") The power critic is opposed (God knows that Greenberg never lacked for opposition), but the aggressive tone of even the fiercest opposition pays perverse tribute to the stature of the target.

Greenberg's reputation for violence was, predictably, linked to his sexual glamour, too. Though he was not handsome, and certainly not agreeable, he had a kind of twisted fleshy presence—the presence that Everett Sloane has in "The Lady from Shanghai." He had a seedy sexual appeal that is difficult to accept, in these days of the Vertical Club and the magazine *Men's Health*, but in the days when nicotine-stained and whiskey-breath poets like Auden and Dylan Thomas were setting the style he seems to have been irresistible.

THE myth has Greenberg emerging from the forties as the unquestioned art dictator of New York. In fact, he was an embattled minority figure for the next fifteen years, gaining real power only in the sixties. Rubenfeld is extremely good on the complexities of the art battles that he was caught up in. What came between Greenberg and the art-world power he sought in the fifties was, she argues convincingly, the "triumvirate" of Harold Rosenberg, Thomas Hess, and Willem de Kooning.

Rosenberg, who looked uncannily like Tenniel's Walrus in "Through the Looking-Glass"—whereas Greenberg looked uncannily like the Carpenter—was the honest-to-God article: a real New York intellectual, a far more various critic than Greenberg, and a real writer, rather than a polemicist, able to talk brilliantly about artists as different as Steinberg, Avedon, and Cornell. He was subtle-minded and almost absurdly slippery in argument, with a special kind of bearish charm that seems genuinely Johnsonian. His famous essay "The American Action Painters," which appeared in 1952, reintroduced into art criticism a human dimension that Greenberg's much loftier dialectical scheme had seemed to eliminate. Rosenberg's Action painter wasn't a dialectical result; he was an existential hero, flinging a pot of paint in the face of Big Brother (or Bloomingdale's; it amounted to the same thing). But, as Rubenfeld points out, he based his theory on a willful misunderstanding of de Kooning's painfully fastidious style, and the Tenth Street School artists who adopted his line are now almost entirely forgotten.

Greenberg, in the same period in the fifties, was promoting the work of Newman and Rothko, and, a little later, his lover Helen Frankenthaler, whose first "stained" pictures suggested a Greenbergian ideal. It is Greenberg's picks who now dominate the rooms at the Museum of Modern Art devoted to the period from the late forties to the early sixties, and not because the people who put them there are "Greenbergians." The winnowing process by which a picture begins to look more like its period than like itself happens very quickly, and by now the Tenth Street painters look as dated as bullfight posters and Chianti in straw-encased flasks.

Yet the painters whom Greenberg sponsored weren't entirely grateful for his sponsorship, since it sold short their metaphysical pretensions. The situation of Greenberg in the late fifties oddly recalls that of Ruskin a hundred years or so before, when he had drained Turner dry and had an uneasy sense that maybe an evangelical, moralizing scheme didn't really fit Turner in the first place. Like Ruskin, Greenberg couldn't get anything more out of his hero, so he midwifed a movement that corresponded more closely to the history he had deduced from him. In Ruskin's case, the movement was Pre-Raphaelitism, in which Turner's passionate truth to nature was turned into microscopic literalness, and his majestic pessimism into neat, allegorical priggishness. In Greenberg's case, the movement was color-field painting—the reduced essence of poured paint on unprimed canvas, which Greenberg encouraged Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland to pursue. Color-field painting is American Pre-Raphaelitism—touching in its ingenuousness and annoying in its complacency.

Another myth of recent history is that in the sixties the art world rebelled against Greenberg, producing art—Pop, minimalism—that his theory could neither contain nor admire. In fact, the decade was his high-water mark, because the contemporary art he sponsored—that of Louis and Noland and, later, of Jules Olitski and Larry Poons—was selling, and, more important, because the art he had sponsored in the forties was moving inexorably into the museum world of retrospectives and catalogues and permanent collections. His horses had all come home.

And no wonder they had, his critics say, since he was also operating the starting gate, setting the odds, and waiting at the home stretch with a rifle to fire at any nag he hadn't bet on. Certainly, by the mid-sixties he was the most powerful art adviser and collectors' counsellor in America. Collectors who listened to him (of course, few listened only to him) stretched from the Wrights, in Seattle, and the de Menils, in Houston, to Eugene Schwartz, in New York. But his taste had already begun to lose its organic basis, and had become increasingly a set of axioms, and then increasingly a list of names. The comparison between Green-

BRIEFLY NOTED

A PRAYER FOR THE CITY, by Buzz Bissinger (Random House; $25.95). Throughout his first term as the mayor of Philadelphia (1992-96), Edward Rendell gave the author the run of his administration, allowing him an insider's view of his struggle to rescue the city from insolvency. Bissinger not only reports on the doings of politicians, bureaucrats, union leaders, and ethnic spokesmen but also tells the stories of four Philadelphians to illustrate the ways in which a city's plight affects ordinary citizens. The result is a fascinating, humane, and somewhat depressing portrait of the ills of urban America. Although Rendell did a magnificent job, and was reëlected, Bissinger doubts that any individual can permanently reverse the effects of national policies that favor suburbs at the expense of cities.

NO REGRETS: THE LIFE OF MARIETTA TREE, by Caroline Seebohm (Simon & Schuster; $27.50). Marietta Tree contrived, in an antifeminist age and in a particularly antifeminist echelon of society, to wield greater authority than her consorts, who included Adlai Stevenson, Ronald Tree, John Huston, and Desmond FitzGerald. Born a beauty, she became society's grandest hostess, but she also learned to transform influence into power—especially during her years with Stevenson—putting forward an agenda that was very much her own. Tree's almost unique ability to combine glamour and rectitude is reflected in Seebohm's witty, readable, and substantial biography, which steers a clear course between the splashy and the academic.

THE ELGIN AFFAIR, by Theodore Vrettos (Arcade; $26.95). The Earl of Elgin—who became Great Britain's ambassador to Turkey in 1799, when Greece was a part of the Ottoman Empire—was obsessed by the beauties of antiquity. Initially, he intended merely to have surviving art works copied, but the dilapidation of the Acropolis and the success of the French in shipping home bits of the Parthenon suggested the next step: the transfer of almost everything that could be pried loose. Elgin's booty is now in the British Museum, but the venture proved suggestive of a mummy's curse: a mysterious disease, contracted in Constantinople, rotted his nose; his wife was unfaithful; and Parliament paid him so little for his financially extravagant enterprise that he had to move to France to escape his creditors.

TRICKSTER MAKES THIS WORLD, by Lewis Hyde (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $26). Coyote, Raven, Monkey, Loki, Krishna, Hermes: all are tricksters, creators of meaning in a world that would freeze into unbreachable decorum without their presence. In his brilliant new book, his first since "The Gift," the author examines the trap that this agent of chance and mischance sets for all humans and all gods—and in which he himself is routinely caught. Hyde begins by talking about the "Homeric Hymn to Hermes," and the Coyote tales so prevalent in Native American tradition, but by the time he is done he has folded language, culture, and the very habit of being human into his ken.

berg and Bernard Berenson, the most famous American connoisseur of the early part of the century in this respect, runs true. Berenson had begun with a series of powerful responses to Italian Renaissance painting, and had turned them into a somewhat cumbersome abstract theory, though in his case the theory was psychological rather than historical. The intensity of his experiences had led him to produce his lists of authentic pictures, and then the lists took the place of the experiences. By the time the millionaires got to him, they were paying for names, and certainties. Similarly, Greenberg was seen as a man with a list rather than a theory, although it was a list of authentic contemporary artists rather than authentic old pictures.

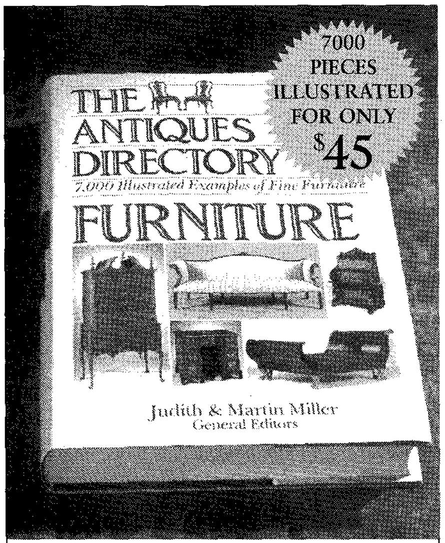
His involvement with the art market was, on the whole, reputable. Though he may conceivably have taken money from the Emmerich gallery, it was for sales of paintings by artists he had sponsored all along. He simply put other people's money where his mouth had always been. But, like Berenson, he could not climb down from the mountain of authority on which he now perched. Although he tried sporadically to renew his thinking—for a time, he wrote interestingly about Duchamp, for instance—he had achieved a position of power by offering a theory that, whatever its philosophical origins, seemed to provide, as a natural bonus, a handy buying guide.

In any case, what is striking about Greenberg's influence is not how strong and vast it was but how quickly it was defeated. When the resolutely non-Greenbergian painters did begin to appear, not one of them—not Jasper Johns or Warhol or Roy Lichtenstein, or even minimalists like Frank Stella—suffered for a minute from a lack of critical attention or of collectors' desire. (Of course, some of them remember suffering in the sense of having had nasty things said about their work. The death throes of a predator can look a lot like an attack, if you're the one with the teeth in your leg.)

By then, Greenberg was past reacting, and was just reiterating. In the early sixties, he had become involved with what was called Newtonian therapy, a practice that held that all psychological problems were the result of dependency relationships. The notion that what he lacked was selfishness was pie to Greenberg, and he went into a spin of sex and drugs. His role at the heart of the group underlined the general sense that he had become not just interestingly difficult but downright sinister. His last lectures were bizarre, professional-wrestling performances: he would come out and sneer, and his audience would boo. Some people who knew him, it should be said, knew a much more engaging, ironic man, whose bark . . .

But they were the ones who were never bitten. He died in 1994, having spent two decades on drugs, in search of oblivion. His biographer observes carefully, "He smoked pot and hashish regularly, sniffed coke four, sometimes five, even six times a week, sniffed heroin . . ." He never lost his perfect pitch for quality, though. This legendary defender of high art loved pop music; according to the critic Barbara Rose, in the sixties he adored a Peter and Gordon song called "World Without Love." As Greenberg almost certainly wouldn't have known, it was one of the very few Lennon-McCartney songs not recorded by the Beatles.

GREENBERG'S lasting contributions—his crucial revaluation upward of the reputations of Matisse and Monet, for instance—are, in no bad sense, academic ones. He was an inspired amateur historian and a great curator without a portfolio. His contribution as a critic, though, is more dubious. Good criticism leaves a halo around its objects, like a ring around the moon. Power criticism leaves only a residue, like a ring around a bathtub. As a writer, Greenberg left behind a handful of once good words—"aesthetic," "quality"—emptied of meaning and reduced to defensive incantations. Compare him with Randall Jarrell and James Agee, who were right there at *The Nation* with him in the forties, and it is hard not to feel that their improvisational approach to criticism, for all its modesty, did more to defend values than Greenberg's. Formalism has to be pretty informal to work: Agee and Jarrell didn't worry much about how you reconciled personal pleasure and historical significance. They just did it, by a high-hearted, vigilant, self-aware sorting out of all the ways that technical means—metre, sequence, montage, the look on an actor's face, the rhythms in a Lowell poem—can inflect and carry meanings. Criticism that rules rules by terror and passes into history. Criticism that lives lives by its wits. ♦



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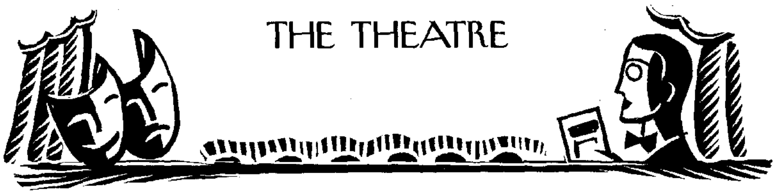


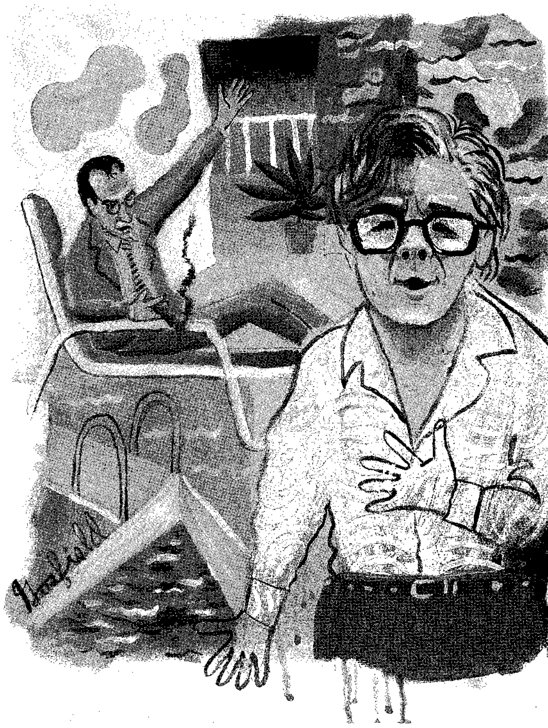
THE THEATRE

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Dysfunctional intimacies in Hollywood and County Galway.

BY JOHN LAHR

According to a show-biz *philosophe* of my acquaintance, "Hollywood is a place where you are hero today, gonif tomorrow." Jon Robin Baitz worked in Hollywood as a gofer for a foundering, two-bit producer in the mid-eighties, and he dramatizes this familiar trajectory of decline in "Mizlansky/Zilinsky; or, 'Schmucks'" (at the Manhattan Theatre Club), a high-spirited semi-autobiographical Remembrance of Thieves Past. Baitz's Davis Mizlansky is the sort of producer who can no longer get a film off the ground but can still float one last get-rich scheme—in this case, the sale of a dubious tax shelter that involves making deliberately unsuccessful children's records of Bible stories (like Flip Wilson telling the story of the Last Supper). Mizlansky—played with terrific gusto by Nathan Lane, whose yapping pugnacity always contains a whiff of panic—is the kind of guy who would steal your stove and come back for the smoke. Unlike David Mamet's "Speed-the-Plow" and Arthur Kopit's "The Road to Nirvana," whose hilarity about Hollywood is fuelled by an exhilarating moral outrage, Baitz's comedy is inspired by nostalgia for the vulgar energy of the cockamamie dodge, and for the weird loyalties of predatory small fry still trying to swim with the big fish.

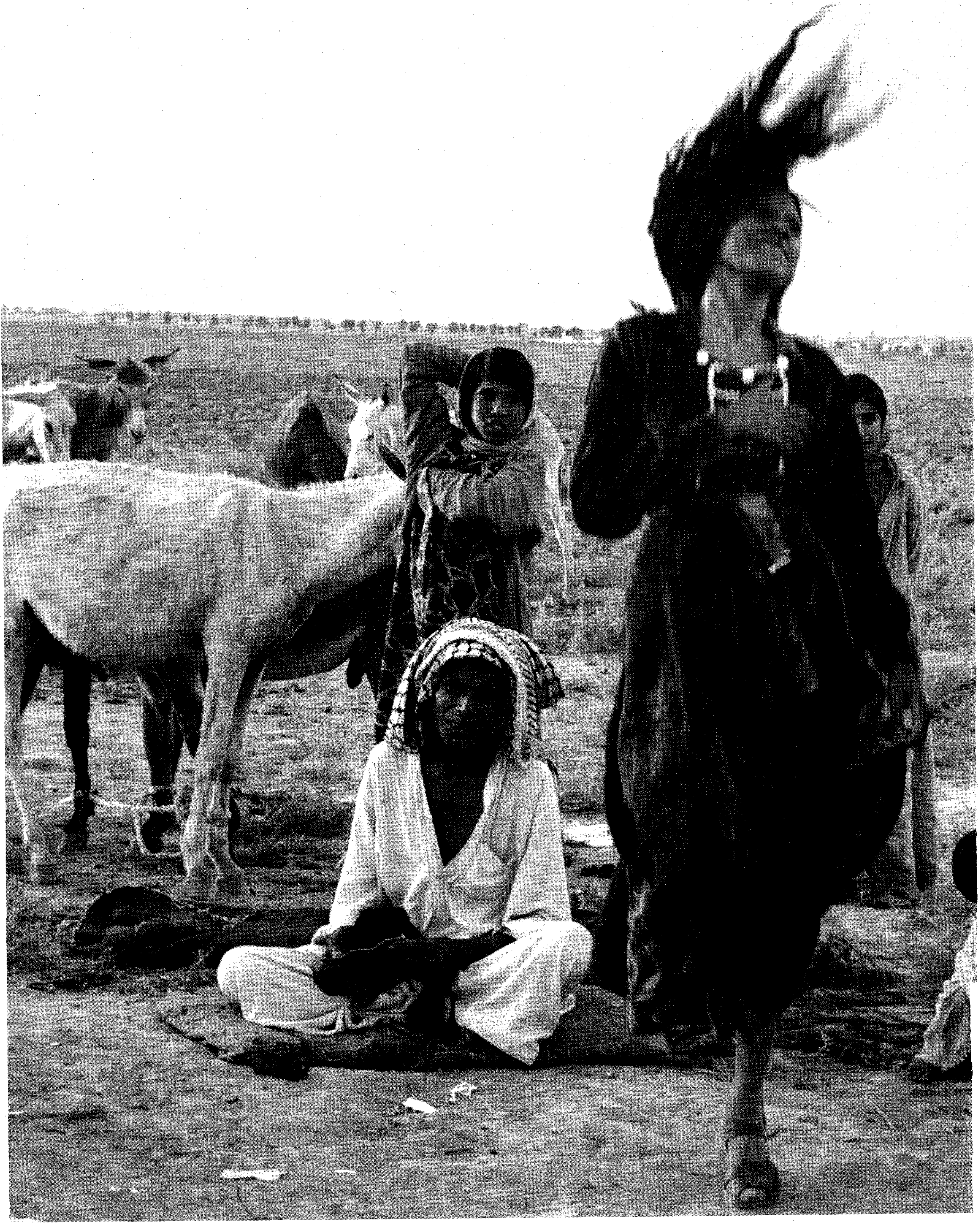


Lewis J. Stadlen and Nathan Lane scheming to get rich quick in "Mizlansky/Zilinsky."

JOSH GOSFIELD

At the play's opening, Mizlansky has backed his wide ass into a very tight corner. The I.R.S. is trying to convict him of fraud, while his urbane partner and erstwhile best friend, Sam Zilinsky (the droll Lewis J. Stadlen), furious at being embroiled in the tax mess, has just stolen back their last four hundred thousand dollars of laundered Cayman Islands "emergency money," which they'd skimmed off previous deals. But Mizlansky has cooked up a plan to sell their record venture to a consortium of wealthy Oklahoman dentists, and he needs Zilinsky to pull it off. Inevitably, the dream of Easy Street turns into a dead end, but not before we have witnessed the hilarious wooing of Zilinsky back into the scam, the fiasco of the deal closing, and Mizlansky's craven survival by turning his friend over to the I.R.S. to save his own skin.

As Baitz depicts Hollywood—aided by the elegant direction of Joe Mantello



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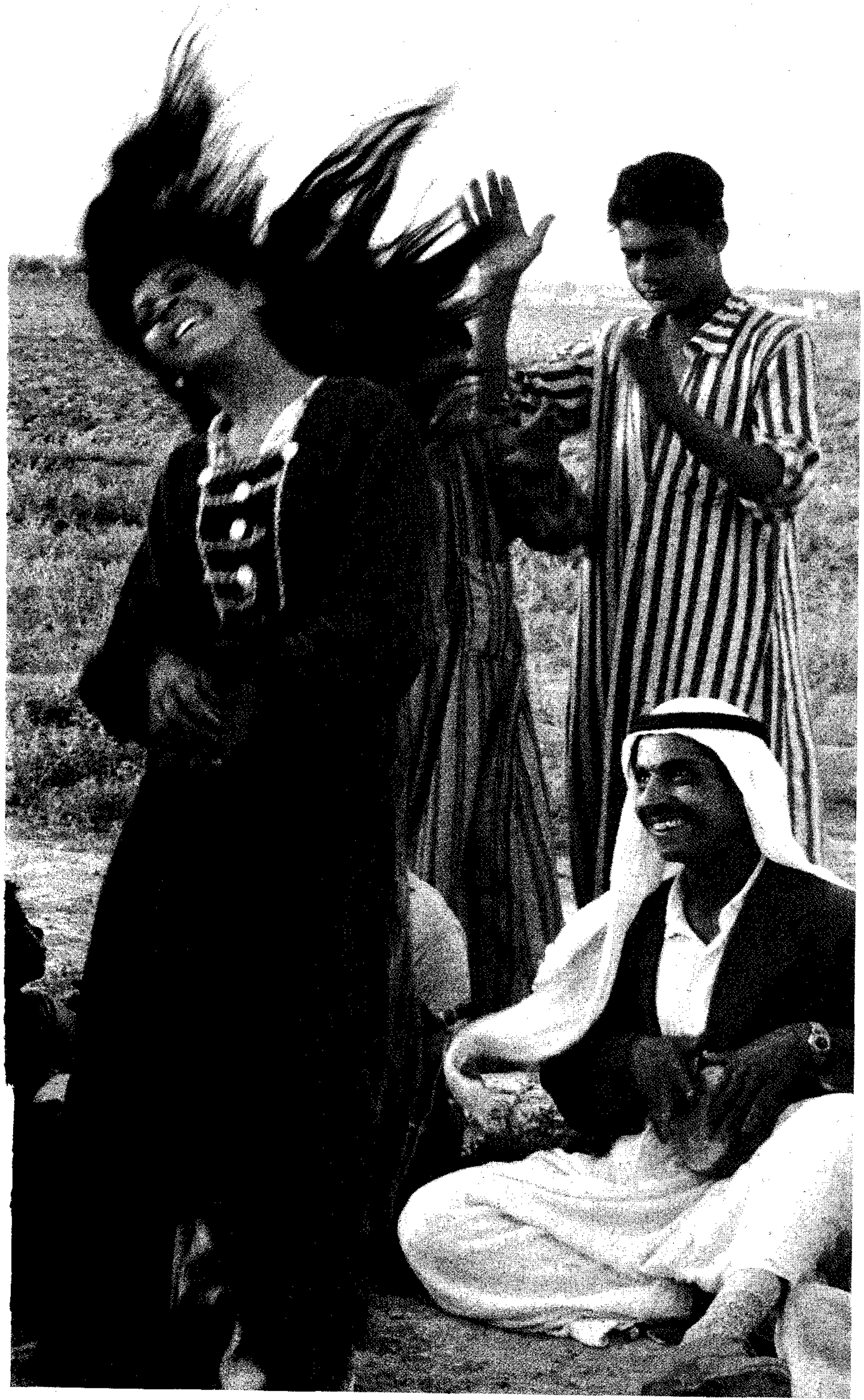
NOMAD *Inge Morath, a photographer for Magnum, has visited dozens of countries in her career, often learning the native tongue kinetic image of dancing Bedouins while travelling along the silk route through Iraq in 1956. It will be included in an exhibiti*



e people she photographs (to date, she speaks eight languages). Morath captured this lebrating her seventy-fifth birthday which opens on March 20th at the Leica Gallery, in SoHo.

and the moody lighting of Brian MacDevitt—"the Coast" is not so much a description of the local geography as a description of the spirit: the frenzy of the hustle only magnifies the doomed drift of the characters' lives. "We're remaindered people," the stalled scriptwriter Alan Tolkin (Mark Blum) tells the faded star Lionel Hart (the twitchy Paul Sand), both of whom are enlisted by Mizlansky as honey to lure the fly he wants to swat—in this case, the Oklahomans' rube lawyer, Horton de Vries (the superb Larry Pine). Just before Zilinsky is sent to prison, Mizlansky remarks,"You know—there are only two plots in this life: the one that works out the way it should, and the one that doesn't." But Baitz's breezy plot, which is, finally, a sentimental one, ends as it should: Mizlansky is allowed to make a kind of atonement; Zilinsky is allowed to extend a hint of friendship.

At the finale, in the play's penultimate beat, Zilinsky remembers their first deal. "And you ran in, and you said, 'They signed. They signed it. It's our town,'" he says, striking just the right elegiac commercial note. "It's our town," Mizlansky says, from somewhere far away in himself as the lights fade. This potent atmosphere of affection and regret is the play's charm, and Baitz's felicitous dramatic accomplishment.

COMEDY turns darker and deeper in Martin McDonagh's "The Beauty Queen of Leenane" (at the Atlantic Theatre Company), which is a riveting winter's tale—as chill and bleak and cruelly amusing as the pebble-granite impoverishment of the rural Irish cottage in which it's set. McDonagh, a precocious Anglo-Irish playwright, is a natural storyteller. He can make an audience gasp. He knows how to twist a plot, how to reveal personality through gesture, and how to bring the set into play. He is also, incidentally, very funny. "The Beauty Queen of Leenane," written when he was twenty-three, is his first hit, and is the first play of a trilogy set in County Galway that has now been staged in both England and Ireland. This prize-winning Druid/Royal Court production, directed, with unassuming authority, by Garry Hynes, has been imported

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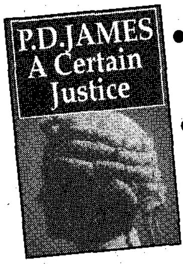

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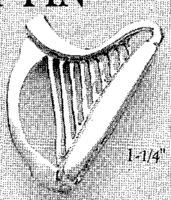

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lock, stock, and crucifix. The tale is a simple, primitive one about an aged mother and her virgin forty-year-old daughter, who is trapped in a punishing solitude. And yet it is filled with complex emotional surprises and reversals.

When the lights come up on this dishevelled world, pelting rain is visible through smudged windows above the kitchen sink. Mag Folan (the stolid and sensational Anna Manahan) sits in her rocker, looking vacantly in the direction of the TV. Her drenched daughter enters behind her with the groceries. "Wet, Maureen?" she says without looking up. She stresses the first syllable of her daughter's name so that it comes out in an infuriating nasal, buzz-saw whine: "*Mau*-reen." "Of course wet," says Maureen (the pale and poignant Marie Mullen). The room instantly becomes a force field of crackling, opposing energies: silent fury from the dutiful daughter and cunning manipulation by the ignorant mother. Maureen gets even for her bondage in the freewheeling bitterness of her gibes. "I suppose now you'll never be dying," she says. But Mag gives as good as she gets. "Seventy you'll be at my wake," she counters in one acid thought, "and then how many men'll be round your waist with their aftershave?"

When Maureen returns home from a party with the besotted, earnest Pato (Brían F. O'Byrne, in a compelling study of ungainly decency), hope glimmers for an instant in the desolate surroundings. Maureen takes him to bed; their emergence the next morning in front of the sour old crone begins as high comedy and ends as high melodrama—the kind of emotional rollercoaster that McDonagh specializes in. Dressed in only a flimsy slip, Maureen swans around the room, shoving her pale, rounded body and her sexual exploits in her mother's disgusted hatchet face. "Just thanking you for a wonderful night, I am, Pato," she says, after planting herself unexpectedly on the embarrassed man's lap and kissing him. "Well worth the wait it was. *Well* worth the wait." She goes on, "I do like going around the house half-naked. It does turn me on, it does."

She even taunts her mother about the older woman's piquant habit—acted out before our eyes—of emptying her chamber pot in the sink. In retaliation, Mag tries to cut her daughter down to size with one ferocious low blow: she mentions Difford Hall. "An oul nut-house in England," she explains to the bewildered suitor, "I did have to sign her out of and promise to keep her in me care. Would you want to be seeing the papers now?" she crows, and waddles off to find proof. Her absence allows Pato to show off his maturity and his goodness. By the time Mag returns with evidence, he's leaving, and promising to write Maureen from London, where he will work in construction. As soon as he's out the door, Mag says, "He won't write at all."

Pato does in fact write two letters, which are spoken by him to the audience; as staged, the letters show off McDonagh's uncanny knack of playing with our expectations. From the first letter, to Maureen, we learn that he wants to start a new life with her in America and that their night together was a sexual flop: Maureen's convincing show of sexual fulfillment turns out to have been a virgin's vindictive fantasy of liberation from her overbearing mother. Pato's second letter is to his younger brother, Ray Dooley; and, as in every folktale, Pato repeatedly warns his brother to deliver the first letter personally: "P.S. Remember now, in Maureen's hand put it."

Of course, Dooley doesn't. The bored Dooley, played by Tom Murphy in a tour de force of Irish oafishness which almost steals the show, tries in vain to endure Mag's infernal banality. As Dooley paces around the room, the audience and Mag watch the letter as warily as a cat eying a canary. It's exquisite anguish. When Mag finally gets her claws on the letter, she reads it and promptly stuffs it in the stove—a gesture that seals both her daughter's fate and her own. But then, just when we think that we're ahead of the story, McDonagh, with great narrative panache, changes the game, and we find ourselves once more behind the plot's curve. He steers the play through a series of thrilling switchbacks from triumph to tragedy which lead to a dour, clear-eyed finale. As the old saying goes, "It's always darkest before it's totally black." ♦

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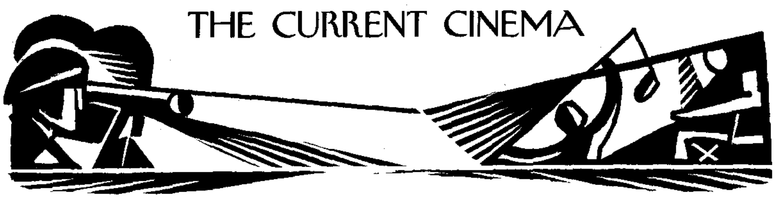
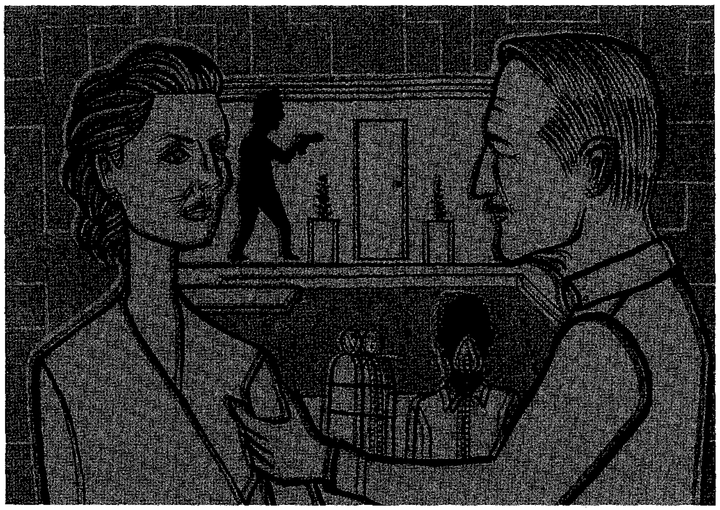


GOLDEN OLDIES

Smooth performances in Robert Benton's new mystery.

BY ANTHONY LANE



Susan Sarandon and Paul Newman in "Twilight."

HIROSHI TANABE

IN Robert Benton's "Twilight," Paul Newman plays a man called Harry Ross. Harry is a cop turned private investigator turned handyman, and a drunk who's clinging to the wagon by his nails. The sight of someone as weathered as Newman sipping ginger ale out of those dinky little green bottles is certainly a sobering experience, rather like watching Steve McQueen on a tricycle. Everyone in "Twilight" appears to be giving something up. Catherine Ames (Susan Sarandon) wants to quit smoking, although this heroic ambition is slightly compromised by her belief that if someone else lights the cigarette for you it doesn't count. The moral implications of this principle strike me as endlessly fascinating. Nixon would have liked her.

Then, we have Catherine's husband, Jack (Gene Hackman), who is renouncing a pleasure even more scalding and elaborate than a good smoke. Jack is dying, and doing it fast. He will leave behind a wife whom he loves ever more fiercely as the prospect of losing her nears, and a daughter, Mel (Reese Witherspoon), whom he loves despite her tendency to scoot off and get laid in Mexico. He will also miss his old pal Harry, with whom he plays cards; their games of gin rummy are as practiced and benignly peevish as those of Judy Holliday and Broderick Crawford in "Born Yesterday." Harry lodges in the Ames household in Los Angeles; they feel they owe him, perhaps, since he went to fetch the straying Mel and came back with a bullet in the groin, or thereabouts.

The word at police headquarters is that Harry was emasculated. Paul Newman as the world's first dickless dick? Cassidy without the Butch? Surely no major star could live with such a role, and, indeed, my interest flopped as Harry dutifully added to his list of errands by going to bed with Catherine. Compared with changing the motor on the tumble-dryer, this new task is definitely a step up and, if all goes well, unlikely to be blocked by lint; in the words of Jack, however, who soon finds out what happened, "I'm curious to know what kind of man fucks his dying best friend's wife." "Not a good one," Harry replies, without missing a beat. Newman isn't afraid to make Harry something of a sad case—weary and watchful, and none too impressed with himself. But the movie

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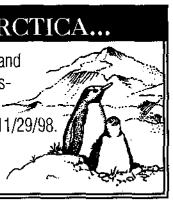

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cuts him some slack: even before the opening credits, he is required to lower his shades and give us a flash of the Newman eyes, their sea blue all but undimmed.

Adultery is the least of Harry's worries. The most is that Jack gave him an address across town and asked him to deliver a package to a lady named Gloria Lamar. Harry looks a mite suspicious at this request, and you can't blame him; the first rule of being a private eye, working or retired, is to cancel all deliveries and head for the Yukon rather than meet up with anybody called Gloria. "Twilight" is a serious film, possibly too serious, yet there are times when it steps dangerously close to parody; it reeks of that throbbing, whiskey-sour climate that enveloped the later Chandler books, and some of Harry's lines, especially those in voice-over, replay the aimlessly vengeful riff of Marlowe's disappointment. "Before he was dead he was a very sick man," says Harry as he ponders the unfamiliar corpse—what else?—that lies fat and slumped in Gloria's apartment. From here, it is a slow trail through the buried, ruinous secrets of Jack and Catherine, the passions of young Mel, and the plans of the elusive Gloria (Margo Martindale), who winningly describes herself as "blond, big, mucho hair, mucho tits." Sounds like Schwarzenegger in "Red Sonja," but there you go.

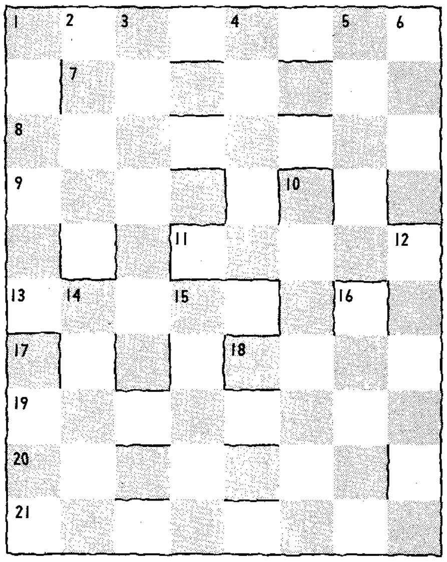
The plot of "Twilight" is suitably knotted, but I'm not sure that Robert Benton's heart is in it; like his fellow-director Alan Rudolph, he is more enthralled by the mood that rises from mysteries than by the mysteries themselves. You come to the end of the affair feeling more seduced than satisfied; it's the kind of film in which the sleuth traces the dame through the smell of her perfume. As the title suggests, it's about a time of day and a time of life—about the pinks and grays that fall upon you before the final noir. The director of photography is Piotr Sobocinski, who shot Kieslowski's "Three Colors: Red," and he proves equally adept at taking the emotional temperature of L.A.—starting with a nude in a Hockneyish pool, dropping to still-warm sunsets, and quietly cooling to aquamarines. The movie is full of mirrors, and of glass that should clarify but seems only to confuse. Harry's friend Raymond Hope (the very name is half a joke), played by James Garner, lives in an aerie overlooking the city; its rooms, propped aloft by steel stanchions, jut out into nothingness, and the bravado of the design comes to strike you as mighty precarious. These are men who would prefer not to be reminded that they, too, are hanging over the void.

"Twilight" is a beautiful and annoying movie that doesn't quite click; its honorable attempts at a slow, pensive pace tend to veer into the sluggish, and I do wish that the characters would stop promising to be "right there" for one another. Given that its narrative would just about grace an average episode of "The Rockford Files," the best reason to see Benton's film is, unsurprisingly, the smooth mesh of its performances. In their various exchanges, Newman, Hackman, and, best of all, Garner—whose name isn't even on the posters—set and sustain a rhythm that leaves the other performers stranded, and even embarrassed. Stockard Channing, buttoned into unflattering suits, looks out of sorts as a local police lieutenant, and Giancarlo Esposito takes the role of Reuben, a dope who wants to partner Harry, and tries to make it funny. Comic turns do not sit happily in the world of Robert Benton, whose sense of humor is as cautious as the half smile of his leading man.

One thing is for sure: Paramount has picked the right time to release a movie that showcases the skills of an older generation. Put "Twilight" next to the list of Oscar nominations for Best Actor, which includes Jack Nicholson, Peter Fonda, Robert Duvall, and Dustin Hoffman, and the whole thing starts to look like a campaign, or, at any rate, a cri de coeur, from Hollywood: Where have all the smoothies gone? What is lacking in the lusty youth of America? Instead of young Nicholsons and Hackmans, what we get nowadays is an almost indistinguishable roster of boys with big chins: Chris O'Donnell, Matthew McConaughey, Matt Damon. Matt Damon! Cary Grant would have tipped him five bucks for being a good bellhop. The biggest laugh I have had in the past couple of years came from a *Vanity Fair* cover story that hailed McConaughey as the next Paul Newman. As "Twilight" demonstrates, there isn't much wrong with the current one. I would love to think that in forty years' time, in the remake of "Twilight," Matt and Chris will sit at a table and deal cards, or enjoy a craggy conversation about prostates and old peckers. But don't count on it. ◆

8x10 CRYPTIC

NO. 36 BY PATRICK BERRY



ACROSS

1 Prepare dry place for electronic device (2, 6)
7 Beaten 0 to 1, following unsatisfactory touchdown (7)
8 U.S. car—I mean, convertible (8)
9 Walter Mitty's middle name (4)
11 Portion of "Q&A" getting edited out (5)
13 Share Spanish literature (5)
18 Inheritor edges away from the I.R.S. (4)
19 Cruise or use the oars, in the future (8)
20 Fixed a man's head wound up (7)
21 Sentimental about handle—it opens the door (8)

DOWN

1 Traces lost shipping containers (6)
2 Deer flanking west side of mountain peaks (5)
3 Composed lie, pure and simple (7)
4 It's rolled in gold for so long (5)
5 On Tuesday, stick up decree (5)
6 Broadway show's opening (4)
10 Broke Ed's plastic model (2, 5)
12 Speaking in pig Latin, damage throat (6)
14 Hop over hole's plug (5)
15 Jeremy is embracing Ron (5)
16 Part of computer disk in fluid died (5)
17 State bridges out ahead (4)

• •

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ANSWERS TO 8x10 CRYPTIC NO. 35

ACROSS

1 DEB + ATE
7 IMP + ROVED
8 ABUT (rev.)
9 KIT + E
10 T(he) + IN CAN
11 ELDER (2 defs.)
15 REFER (palindrome)
16 P + ELVIS (ref. skater Elvis Stojko)
17 ON US
18 GROW(l)
19 SEMINARS (anag.)
20 BESIDE (hidden)

DOWN

1 DIAPER (rev.)
2 EMB(OLDEN)ED
3 (p)ARTIER
4 EVICT (hidden)
5 SET A RECORD (anag.)
6 EDEN (anag.)
12 REIGNS (*rains* hom.)
13 BROWSE (*brows* hom.)
14 PLUMB (*plum* hom.)
16 POST (anag.; ref. etiquette specialist Emily Post)

IF UNABLE TO REACH TELEPHONE LISTINGS, SEND REQUESTS, WITH ISSUE DATE NOTED, TO THE NEW YORKER READER SERVICES, 20 WEST 43RD ST., NEW YORK, NY 10036.

980316

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

PERMIT PENDING

BY BRUCE McCALL

THE Office of the Mayor requires that you complete and return this Supplementary Application Form before a Parade permit can be approved and issued for __March 17__, 19_98_.

The city computer is currently overloaded with the search for the jaywalker seen crossing Madison Avenue near Sixty-fifth Street at 3:23 P.M. yesterday. Please manually calculate the permissible length of your Parade using this formula: For every $1 your organization contributed to our Mayor's reëlection campaign, your group may march six inches.

$$$ x 6 in. = parade length of ____.

Based on the above, the Office of the Mayor will assign one of the following routes to your Parade: (a) Fifth Avenue; (b) Fourteenth Street; (c) Avenue B; (d) Lexington Avenue subway.

To the Parade Grand Marshal: In announcing that you are handing over your title to the Mayor, your press release must include *at least two* of the following background facts: (a) The Mayor has worked overtime to bring us this mild winter; (b) The Mayor's tireless efforts to abolish earthquakes in New York City are finally paying off; (c) During the Mayor's time in office, not a single Iraqi Scud missile has landed in any of the five boroughs.

(A mayoral representative will arrange a time to collect your sash.)

Police Advisory: The Police Commissioner has laryngitis, so the Mayor himself has issued this important notice: "In accordance with recent trends in New York City crime statistics, rowdiness, straggling, stepping on someone else's heels, and dropping of candy wrappers by Parade marchers and spectators MUST be reported as being fifty-two per cent lower than last year."

Crowd-Control Precautions: Pursuant to our Mayor's recent directive, a pedestrian-control system will be in effect during your Parade. Marchers must follow only that route indicated by barricade positioning. The resulting "zigzag" marching pattern will help educate the citizenry to proper walking etiquette at a time when automobiles are constantly being interfered with, stopped, and otherwise abused.

Estimate the total number of anticipated spectators at your Parade: ___.

If the Mayor will be present, triple estimate: ___.

In case of rain, subtract fifty per cent of anticipated spectators, and our Mayor: ___.

Permit Qualification Test

1. "If I were marooned on a desert island with a fractured spine and no food or water and received a copy of the New York *Post* or *Daily News* with a front-page picture of our Mayor proudly leading this Parade, I would feel: (a) lots better; (b) my old self again; (c) indifferent."

2. Any gridlock caused by this Parade is: (a) a legacy of the Dinkins administration's lax stoplight-bulb-replacement efforts; (b) good for the city's economy, adding millions in gasoline-tax revenue; (c) the tiresome whining of the West Side Birkenstock lobby.

3. Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, and our Mayor attend a fund-raiser at the Waldorf. Who gives the keynote speech? (a) Jesus; (b) Buddha; (c) Muhammad; (d) our Mayor.

4. Our city is better off without (answer YES or NO):

___The Koch/Dinkins crime wave
___Squeegee-wielding drug tsars
___Police Commissioner B_____n
___The Upper West Side

(If your answer to any question is NO, apply for Parade permit to the City of Yonkers.)

5. This Parade will be a tide of humanity symbolizing the truth in the old saying that: (a) "You can't ____ City Hall." (b) "Mayor hecklers are the scum of the ____." (c) "Nobody ____ with our Mayor and gets away with it."

Sign Here, Then Read Below

Your name: ________________.

I hereby agree that the following terms MUST NOT appear on any banner, placard, or other display materials within a hundred feet of our Mayor at any point during the Parade: "D'Amato"/"Patronage"/"Balding"/"Humorless"/"Control Freak"/"Bully"/"Dictator"/"Reign of Terror." Offenders will have their streets blocked by Department of Sanitation vehicles even more than usual. Our Mayor knows who, what, and where you are. ◆

NISHAN AKGULIAN

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